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CONFIDENTIAL.

(7308.)

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F.O.
424

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7307.]

January to June 1899.

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[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7307.]

January to June 1899.

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Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7307.]

No. 1.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 2, 1899.)

(No. 668.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 23, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 640 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship copy of a despatch which I have received from Van relative to affairs in the vilayet and the attack on Dr. Belek.

I have communicated that part of the despatch which refers to Dr. Belek to my German colleague.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 34.)
Sir, *Van, December* 7, 1898.

I HAVE the honour to state that the condition of affairs in this vilayet has improved lately, owing to the energetic action of the Vali in dealing with robberies of cattle by the Kurds in this neighbourhood. Most of the animals have now been restored, and the culprits will be punished.

No snow has fallen yet, and the open weather favours the lifting of cattle.

With reference to the case of Dr. Belek, I hear that Zekki Pasha has now given orders that the Kurdish Chiefs, Hussein Pasha and Hajji Timur Pasha, are to be arrested at Arjish and brought in to Van, where they are to be confined in the barracks while inquiries are being made, which I shall attend.

I think it is certain, moreover, that the actual culprits, viz., Hajji Timur Pasha's son and his servant, will also be brought from hiding and sent in here for Dr. Belek to identify.

The opportunity will be an excellent one for pressing for the exile of both these Pashas, if I may so suggest to your Excellency that it be done by Decree from Constantinople. Their crimes are already notorious, and their exile would be richly merited, for their past offences as well as for their participation in this crime. Most of Dr. Belek's effects that were stolen from him were restored to him yesterday in my presence. I have had a list prepared of the further deficiencies.

The Vali has himself paid over from the Government Treasury here a sum of 55*l.*, which had not yet been sent in.

I regret to say that the supply of money for the expenses of this vilayet, usually sent from other provinces of Anatolia—Sivas, for example—has now ceased for the last two months.

Such is the state of poverty to which this once fertile vilayet has now been reduced, that the province is unable to support itself, and serious consequences must occur if no further help is given from outside to pay soldiers and officials.

The question of Crete is only referred to secretly in this town among the Moslems; but the "Young Turks" profess themselves very angry at what they call the weakness of the Sultan over the Thessalian and Cretan questions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 2.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 2, 1899.)

(No. 671.)
Constantinople, December 28, 1898.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, on the subject of Mahommedan public opinion with regard to recent events in Crete and the Soudan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 2.

Consul Longworth to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 40. Confidential.)
Trebizond, December 16, 1898.
Sir,

IT may interest your Excellency to know that the recent events in Crete and in the Soudan are having, on the whole, a good effect on the Mahommedans at Trebizond.

The inquiries I have been conducting of late, both direct and indirect, tend to show that, elated as the Christians are, the majority of the Mussulmans, though subdued and depressed, are by no means disheartened.

The assertion of our power appears to have raised their hopes, and they are now looking forward, it would seem, to better times, when justice will run its course and individual rights will be respected.

There are, of course, among them the disreputable, who are much less easy in their minds—such in particular are those who, during the disturbances, had taken a prominent part in killing and looting, and who now fear lest this moral ascendency should lead to retribution.

The opinion of one of the Notables is significant. Our prestige, he remarked, in the Islamic world is now assured, whatever Yildiz may do in support of that of Germany, Russia, or any other Power. Such, indeed, seems to be the general wish, if not the general belief, of the more intelligent Moslems at Trebizond, irrespective of classes.

Letters from Crete and from Egypt have, I understand, been received in praise of the British military and civil authorities; but this cannot be, I think, the only means they have of keeping themselves informed on passing events. They have, doubtless, other sources of information quick and sure, unknown to me, and obviously unknown to the Central Government, which enables them promptly enough to mould their thoughts on facts, rather than on fiction.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 3.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 9, 1899.)

(No. 674.)
Constantinople, December 31, 1898.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, respecting the rumoured desire of the Vali of Syria to tender his resignation of his post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 3.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 61. Confidential.)
Damascus, December 16, 1898.
Sir,

WITH reference to the telegram which I had the honour to send to your Excellency this morning, I would beg to submit the following explanatory statement.

Your Excellency will, no doubt, have gathered from reports received from different quarters that the Vali showed in all his relations with the German Emperor—the protection and safekeeping of whose person was more especially confided by the Sultan to him —an amount of zeal, vigilance, and activity, which, if occasionally untempered by discretion with regard to other persons, were otherwise beyond all praise.

That the Emperor was thoroughly conscious of and gratified by Nazim Pasha's constant and strenuous efforts to do all that lay in his power, both here and elsewhere, to make the Imperial tour a complete success was demonstrated to the Vali's complete satisfaction on several occasions, and more especially here, when he had the honour of receiving the Emperor in his own house. On this occasion His Majesty not only conferred on the Vali the first class of the Order of the Red Eagle with his own hands, but he also presented him with a handsome gold cigarette case studded with jewels, his own portrait, as well as that of the Empress, painted in oils, his photograph, and the medal struck in commemoration of the Imperial visit to Jerusalem. Moreover, the Emperor communicated to the Vali the tenour of a telegram which His Majesty had addressed to the Sultan, and in which reference was made to the former's services in the most flattering and eulogistic terms.

I have gone somewhat into details on this point in order that your Excellency may understand how eminently satisfactory, and even, if I may say so, cordial, the relations were between the Emperor and the Vali.

And yet the latter has not only, I am credibly informed, received no mark of Ottoman Imperial satisfaction at the highly creditable manner in which he carried out his mission, not even in the form of a letter of approval, but, it is asserted, he has received a despatch censuring him for permitting a certain Selim Bey Tabet, a Maronite Notable, who has, however, no official standing, to take too prominent a part in the reception of the Imperial party. There can be no doubt that Nazim Pasha is deeply mortified by such treatment, the very reverse of what he might fairly have been led to expect as the outcome of a mission the onerous and often delicate duties of which he performed throughout to the complete satisfaction of the illustrious personages whom it chiefly concerned.

It is now nearly three weeks since the Vali was first taken ill, and he still keeps to his house, though, I am given to understand, his malady is of by no means a serious nature. Indeed, it is currently reported, and generally believed, that his indisposition is due rather to moral than to physical causes, and when it is remembered that with Orientals grief and disappointment, more especially in persons of a highly-strung and excitable disposition such as the Vali undoubtedly is, have not unfrequently the same physical effects as disease, the popular explanation seems plausible enough.

With regard to my reference (in the telegram) to Djevad Pasha's appointment to the command of this army corps as being one of the principal reasons of the Vali's request to be transferred elsewhere, I can only repeat what I hear on good authority—viz., that these two functionaries are now, and have been for some years, on anything but good terms, the one with the other.

It is true that my French colleague informs me that Djevad Pasha declared recently to him that he entertained no feelings of enmity towards the Vali, and that "so long as the latter behaved himself well, he was ready and willing to be friendly to him." But, apart from the fact of the somewhat enigmatic wording of the Mushir's proviso (for "good conduct" in such a connection is a very relative term), it is extremely doubtful how far a high functionary in Djevad Pasha's position would speak openly and frankly to a foreign Consul on such a subject. The fact remains that the Vali—who, with infinite trouble and after endless correspondence, succeeded in bringing about the recall of Abdullah Pasha chiefly because, being of equal (nominally, but, in reality, superior) rank to himself, he was constantly interfering with him in administrative matters, not to mention his unceasing attempts to set the Hauran in a blaze—has now had thrust upon him an officer of still higher rank than Abdullah Pasha, and one who, moreover, is a personal enemy of his own. It is not surprising, under the circumstances, that Nazim Pasha should feel that there is nothing for it but to tender his resignation, and this, it would appear, is practically what he has done.

In conclusion, I might mention what I hear on good authority—viz., that many of the high Ottoman officials who formed the special escort of their German Majesties were anything but well disposed towards the Vali, whom they constantly made the victim of their calumny and intrigues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 3.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 62. Confidential.)

Damascus, December 20, 1898.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 61 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Vali has so far recovered his health as to have resumed (yesterday) the discharge of his official duties.

His Excellency called on me this morning, and in the course of conversation I asked him whether it was true that he had taken steps to have it made known in a certain high quarter that he would be glad of a transfer from Damascus elsewhere. The Vali, who was naturally very reserved, denied that he had tendered his resignation, but admitted that his continuous ill-health here and the occurrence of certain disagreeable incidents had disheartened him to such an extent that he had expressed a wish that his services might be utilized elsewhere. His Excellency did not specify in what quarter the "wish" had been "expressed," and I, observing a certain reluctance on his part to discuss the matter more fully, did not press him for further details; but from what passed between us I am inclined to think that my telegraphic statement as to what is alleged to have taken place is not far from the truth. At the same time, it is very possible that the Vali has received from the Sultan a more gracious reply than he had anticipated, in one sense or the other, which would account for the recovery of his health—and, to a certain extent, of his spirits.

I also sounded Nazim Pasha as to his relations with Djevad Pasha, but here again he was very guarded in what he said, which did not amount to much beyond the admission that he had known Djevad Pasha well for some years, that his appointment to the command of this army corps was perhaps, for various reasons, unavoidable, and that he (the Vali) regretted the dismissal of Hakki Pasha (the retiring Commandant), for whom he had a sincere liking.

Should Nazim Pasha remain in Damascus it will be interesting to note the nature of his relations with the Mushir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 4.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 1.)

***Constantinople, January* 5, 1899.**

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, containing notes on a journey through the Trans-Caucasus, with information as to the attitude of the Russian authorities towards the Armenian inroads and the progress of the railway towards Kars and Erivan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 4.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 35.)

Van, December 19, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that during my recent journey through the Trans-Caucasus, on my way to join my post here, I made as many inquiries as possible regarding the Armenian revolutionaries who make raids into this country.

Now that winter has set in quiet may be expected; but in Erivan, Igdir, and more especially Etchmiadzin, there is plenty of material and encouragement for these bands, and there is no doubt they will recommence operations in some part of this vilayet next spring.

Many of the bands cross the frontier range by the numerous paths leading into the Alashgird Plain, and from thence descend either on the Van or Bitlis Provinces.

From the Persian side they seem now less likely to advance, as the Government there has been taking steps against them, at least so I am informed here, and there do not seem to be any in Salmas now.

I asked whether the Armenians cared for the conscription in the Trans-Caucasus, and was told it was not at all to their liking, but that it had the great saving advantage of training up young men to be "saviours of their country," *i.e.*, to form the revolutionary bands who come here.

It is difficult to say what induces the Armenians to do this, as recently certainly most of these bands have been almost or quite exterminated on crossing the frontier; it is surely not high-souled patriotism, as such does not exist among the Armenians, but it is chiefly their inordinate vanity, and love of creating a stir and strutting about the stage for a short time, even although they know they will subsequently be extinguished.

They are, of course, well supplied with money by their Committees, and must have the tacit consent of the Russian Government to be able to cross the frontier at all.

Van town is now free from these Committees and revolutionaries, and I think that the Vali may be trusted to deal with any bands that arrive in a common-sense spirit.

While I was in Erivan the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin expressed a wish that I should pay him a visit; but as I had no instructions from your Excellency on this point, I drove by his place without stopping.

At Igdir quite a crowd of Armenians came round the khan where I was lodging, saying, "Ah! there is the English Consul who is going to help us in Van." Then, seeing that I was at their mercy as regards the hiring of baggage animals, proceeded to force me to take the worst possible animals for the highest possible price.

In the Kurd villages round Bayazid and on the Abagha Plain are several Armenians who have recrossed into Turkey in consequence of the recent Edict in Russia. They have been entirely stripped of any little property they possessed, and are now practically in the position of slaves: the Kurds feeding them and employing them for minding the cattle, or doing any menial office.

The road from Bayazid to Van by Bergri is usually reckoned unsafe, and I met a small party of brigands, who, however, quickly cleared off on seeing a better armed party. Other small caravans I met had their muleteers and owners out in front in skirmishing order, rifles in hand.

Almost every Kurd met with, whether drawing wood, minding sheep, or driving a cart, was armed with a Martini, and hung round with rows of cartridges.

I don't think, however, with the exception of the lawless members of the tribe, that these wretched shepherds and agriculturists care to be forced to have their arms always in their hands, and most would welcome anything in the shape of justice and firm, good government, in place of the travesty of both with which they are at present supplied.

The caravan route from Van into Persia by Serai has this summer been almost entirely closed, owing principally to the insecurity of the country.

The rails of the Tiflis-Kars Railway have now been completed as far as the tunnel a short distance east of Alexandropol.

This tunnel was pierced through some three months ago; the embankments and some of the rails between Alexandropol and Kars have been completed, and the line is expected to be open for traffic early next summer.

The Alexandropol-Erivan branch, although surveyed, has not yet been begun, and it is expected will take two years to complete.

The Petrovsk-Baku line is open as far as Derbend.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 5.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 2.)
Constantinople, January 4, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 663 of the 21st ultimo, relative to the state of affairs in Kurdistan, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput.*

In this despatch attention is drawn to the miserable condition of the inhabitants and of the great suffering which would be caused by the insistence of the Porte on the collection of the military exemption tax.

I requested Mr. Block to communicate the substance of this despatch to the Porte, and to urge that, in consideration of the poverty of the Christian population, they should be granted a remission of the tax.

From the Armenian Patriarch Mr. Block subsequently learned that negotiations had been going on between the Palace and his Beatitude, with the result that the Sultan's First Secretary had promised that an Iradé would be issued before the end of the year adjourning the collection of the tax (which has remained in abeyance since 1897) for another two years.

During a visit which the Armenian Patriarch paid me this morning, his Beatitude informed me that he hoped from day to day to receive the Imperial Iradé remitting the collection of the military tax for another two years.

His Beatitude was grateful for the support I had given to his request.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 6.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 4.)
Constantinople, January 5, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a letter which I have obtained confidentially, addressed by Artin Pasha to his son, in order to be submitted to the Secretary of the Sultan. Artin Pasha is unofficially charged with Armenian affairs, being himself an Armenian and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

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* Already printed.

In this letter he states that the Armenian grievances are left unredressed, the promises of the Sultan unfulfilled, and that the only answer to demands for an inquiry is to accuse the Armenians of aiming at independence. He points out that such a policy is calculated to strengthen the hands of the Powers who were aiming at the disruption of the Turkish Empire.

The letter is interesting only as affording corroboratory evidence from a high Turkish official of the substance of several Consular Reports submitted to your Lordship.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Artin Pasha to his Son, Diran Bey Dadian.

Mon cher Diran,
Le 25 Novembre (7 Décembre), 1898.

VEUILLEZ montrer aujourd'hui même à son Excellence Izzet Bey au Palais Impérial la copie ci-jointe du rapport que j'ai soumis avant-hier à Sa Majesté Impériale.

Pendant votre entretien avec le Bey, veuillez surtout lui décrire toutes les difficultés que j'éprouve à maintenir le calme parmi la nation Arménienne et les Comités, qui ne veulent plus me croire, qui me disent que je les trompe et qui ont perdu l'espoir de voir la situation s'améliorer.

Effectivement, rien ne s'est fait, et aucune promesse donnée par son Excellence Tahsin Bey, au nom de notre auguste Souverain, ne s'est réalisée.

L'affaire de l'élection du Catholicos de Sis reste encore en suspens. Aucune amnestie réelle, tant de fois promise, n'est accordée. A part les £ T. 2,000 ou £ T. 3,000 qu'on a octroyées depuis deux ans pour les pauvres, pour les orphelins, établissements de bienfaisance, &c., aucun secours pécuniaire n'a été donné. Que peuvent faire £ T. 3,000 pour soulager un peuple alors que ce peuple a subi une perte matérielle se chiffrant par plus de £ T. 3,000,000? A deux reprises nous avons prié, le Patriarche et moi, son Excellence le Premier Secrétaire de Sa Majesté de nommer une Commission chargée de rechercher le nombre des propriétés dont les Arméniens ont été dépouillés, et de tâcher, après constatations légales, de restituer aux ayants droit nécessiteux ne fusse [*sic*] que la moitié et même le tiers de ceux qu'on leur a enlevé, et j'ai reçu la réponse suivante: "De quoi est-ce qu'ils ont besoin, les Arméniens? Faut-il que je leur fasse cadeau de la moitié de l'Anatolie?"

Le plus désolant dans tout cela, c'est que de divers côtés on insinue ceci aux Arméniens:—

"Ne croyez rien de ce que l'on vous promet; vous n'obtiendrez rien du tout. Le mauvais vouloir et le parti pris du Gouvernement Ottoman ne sont plus un mystère pour personne."

Les emprisonnements arbitraires tant ici qu'en province, les obstacles qu'on oppose aux voyageurs Arméniens dans l'intérieur, malgré l'innocence et l'honorabilité de ceux-ci, ainsi que la nécessité pour eux de se déplacer pour leurs affaires de commerce, continuent toujours, &c.

Je vous fais là une esquisse rapide des faits principaux. "Et tutti quanti!"

Je crains que tout ceci ne soit de nature à renforcer la campagne que les Puissances se proposent, à ce que je présume, d'entreprendre contre la malheureuse Turquie, en commençant par la Macédoine et en finissant comme gros bouquet, par le Kurdistan et l'Arménie. . . . .

Je ne sais vraiment plus où donner de la tête et si ce n'était le hatir [*sic*] de Sa Majesté Impériale je me serais déjà retiré des affaires Arméniennes, dont je ne tire pour tout profit que déboires, récriminations, et par-dessus le marché, des menaces de mort!

Il serait bon que vous remettiez [*sic*] une copie de la présente à notre intelligent, remarquable, et loyal ami, pour qu'il puisse s'en servir, au besoin, auprès de qui de droit.

Votre père dévoué,
(Signé) ARTIN.

No. 7.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received January* 9.)

(No. 7.)
Constantinople, January 5, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that one Hussein Kenan Bey, a Kurd, and descendant of the Kurdish Chief, Bedekhan Bey, who some years ago unsuccessfully resisted the Turkish arms, took refuge in Her Majesty's Embassy last week, begging that I would assist him to leave the country in order to escape from the persecution of the Minister of Police.

The incident was both curious and awkward, but I caused him to be informed that, if he would return to his house, I would call the attention of the Minister of Police to the matter.

I accordingly sent a private and unofficial message to the Minister to say that I was convinced his Excellency was unaware of the proceedings of his agents, and that, in case there was any accusation against the man, his Excellency would see that no illegal action was taken and that he would have justice.

The Minister stated that the person in question had no grounds for complaint.

Kenan Bey has since addressed to Mr. Block a letter, translation of which I have the honour to inclose, in which he informs me that the Minister of Police was sent for to the Palace and severely reprimanded for having annoyed the man, and thus driven him to take refuge in the Embassy, and adding that the Bey himself was informed that the Sultan was much vexed at his conduct, but that, nevertheless, he was grateful to Her Majesty's Embassy for the action we had taken, as he was now free from all molestation.

The affair, which is of small importance in itself, has become generally known among the Turks, and has a certain interest from the fact that Kenan Bey applied for protection to the Embassy which is known to have advocated strong repressive measures against the Kurds for their share in the unfortunate events in Anatolia; and, secondly, because I learn that satisfaction is expressed in Moslem circles at Kenan Bey's action and the steps taken by the Embassy.

The incident is adduced as a further proof that, in spite of all that has passed in Crete and the attitude of the Palace, the large majority of Moslems believe that the only Power which can assist them and to whom they can appeal for justice is England.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 7.

Hussein Kenan Bey to Mr. Block.

(Translation.)
Constantinople, December 21, 1314 (*January* 2, 1899).

SUBSEQUENT to my taking refuge in Her Majesty's Embassy, the Palace got to hear of the Minister of Police's arbitrary proceedings towards me, and that I had sought the protection of the British Embassy. The Minister of Police was summoned to the Palace, and, in virtue of the Sultan's Iradé, was severely reprimanded by Tahsin Bey, the Sultan's First Secretary, for harassing me without valid reason. On the other hand, His Majesty was very annoyed at my having sought the protection of your Embassy; but at the same time, owing to that protection and your sense of justice, I am now completely free from molestation, for which I beg to express my heartfelt gratitude.

(Beder Khan Pasha Zade),
(L.S.) HUSSEIN KENAN.

No. 8.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received January* 9.)

(No. 8. Confidential.)
Constantinople, January 5, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the Armenian Patriarch called on me yesterday and spoke to me at some length as to the destitution which prevails at present among the Armenians, and his anxiety to procure them some means of relief.

The Sultan, he said, had promised a gift of 1,000*l*., of which 300*l*. had already been paid down. His Beatitude expressed to me the hope that the friends of the Armenians in England, when the facts were made known to them, would come forward with assistance, and he alluded to the letter, copy of which I have the honour to inclose herewith, which he had addressed to me on the subject.

I informed him, in reply, that I had not communicated this letter to your Lordship for publication, as I concluded that his reason for making it confidential was to preclude its publication and shelter himself from the resentment of the Palace.

His Beatitude agreed to this, but added that he thought it might be communicated confidentially to the Duke of Westminster in order that the renewed attention of the Armenian Committees might be called to the urgent necessity of providing help to the suffering populations.

I said that I could not hold out hope of any considerable charitable subscription coming at the present moment to the relief of the Armenians, but that I would forward his letter to your Lordship for confidential communication to the Duke of Westminster's Committee.

I remarked, however, that I viewed with regret that his Beatitude did not consider that the remission of the military tax had been productive of beneficial effect as regarded the Armenian peasants.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 8.

The Armenian Patriarch to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Confidentiel.)
Constantinople, le 8 (20) *Décembre*, 1898.

Excellence,

LES malheurs désastreux et inouïs, dont ont été victimes les Arméniens des Provinces Asiatiques de la Turquie, ont eu pour conséquences naturelles une misère affreuse et l'abandon d'un nombre très considérable de veuves et d'orphelins, privés de toute ressource, de tout soutien.

La charité internationale s'en est émue à juste titre; elle a versé son obole entre les mains de ces infortunés, et avec une générosité véritablement Chrétienne elle s'est empressée de distribuer du pain aux affamés, des vêtements à ceux exposés aux intempéries des saisons, et d'assurer tant soit peu l'existence des orphelins, si dignes de pitié.

La noble Angleterre s'est trouvée à la tête de cette sublime charité, et n'a point fait un vain appel aux cœurs humains qui ont versé des centaines de milliers de livres d'or, mises déjà à la disposition des nécessiteux.

Mais comme tout passe en ce monde, nous avons constaté nous-mêmes depuis l'année dernière, que cet élan spontané de charité envers le malheureux peuple Arménien, a commencé à se ralentir et que les secours ont été sensiblement diminués.

Peut-être, les souscripteurs et les promoteurs ont-ils pensé, que le temps aurait dissipé les chagrins, et que les plaies ouvertes il y a trois ans devaient être déjà cicatrisés.

Mais j'ai la douleur de déclarer à votre Excellence que cette supposition, qui pouvait avoir sa raison d'être suivant l'ordre naturel des choses, ne s'est pourtant pas vérifiée en ce qui nous concerne.

Les nouvelles les plus navrantes continuent à nous arriver chaque jour des provinces qui ont été le théâtre d'événements sanglants. L'indigence est presque au même degré qu'aux premiers jours; partout la population souffre de la privation des objets de première nécessité.

Les moyens ont manqué pour ramener la culture au *statu quo ante*; les terres saisies n'ont point été restituées à leurs propriétaires légitimes; les bêtes de labour et les instruments aratoires ont manqué aux populations des champs; les bras ont sensiblement diminué; les capitaux pour l'industrie ont été indûment enlevés; les facilités pour le trafic ont été systématiquement refusées, même les moyens propres à alimenter le travail journalier; la population n'a pas été autorisée à consacrer ses efforts pour réparer tant de malheurs; et pour comble de misère la récolte de l'année dernière s'est perdue en grande partie, et le peu de produit qui restait aux malheureux habitants ruraux a été préventivement accaparé par les créanciers qui avaient fourni les objets de première nécessité à des conditions exorbitantes, et par les impitoyables receveurs du fisc, lesquels à la suite de l'ajournement en faveur des éprouvés du paiement de l'impôt d'exonération militaire, ont usé de toute leur finesse et de leurs moyens d'action pour les écraser par leurs exigences à l'égard des autres impôts.

Aucune église n'a encore été reconstruite, ni aucune école réparée. Il n'existe pas de maisons dans un grand nombre des villages détruits; les vêtements nécessaires, les moyens les plus élémentaires pour subvenir à l'existence manquent complètement dans la plupart des localités, et dans certains autres l'indigent et l'affamé ne peuvent se les procurer vu leurs prix exorbitants; la famine menace de paraître bientôt en plusieurs endroits.

Excellence,

Je ne veux pas m'étendre davantage sur la description ou la démonstration des faits. Ils sont d'ailleurs pleinement constatés par les rapports officiels, qui ont dû sans doute vous parvenir.

Je vous prie seulement de vouloir bien intercéder auprès de qui de droit, et inviter l'attention des personnes charitables de l'Angleterre, pour venir de nouveau en aide aux Arméniens restés sans ressource. Elles ne refuseront sans doute pas leurs pieuses aumônes, si elles venaient surtout à connaître exactement le triste état des choses et à être persuadées que les Arméniens infortunés sont toujours confiants en leurs sentiments d'humanité, qui contribueront pour une très grande part à la conservation de leur existence et à l'oubli, avec le temps, des malheurs dont ils ont été si cruellement frappés.

Dans la douce espérance de voir toujours les efforts salutaires de votre bienveillante attention, je vous présente ma parfaite reconnaissance et j'invoque la bénédiction Divine sur toutes les personnes charitables qui ont aidé et qui aideront nos pauvres éprouvés.

Que le bon Dieu garde sous sa haute protection votre digne personne et votre noble famille.

Le Patriarche des Arméniens de Turquie,
(Signé) ✠ MALACHIA.

No. 9.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)
Foreign Office, January 14, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 7 of the 5th instant, reporting the steps taken by you on the occasion of a Kurd named Hussein Kenan Bey taking refuge in Her Majesty's Embassy, and asking for your assistance to leave the country.

Your Excellency's action in this matter is approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 10.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 19.)
Constantinople, January 7, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my [illegible] November [illegible] to the state of affairs in the vicinity of Mosul [illegible] Christian [illegible]

owing to the famine prevailing in that district, I have the honour to inclose herewith a further despatch form Acting Consul-General Melvill, dated the 28th November, giving further particulars on the subject.

I instructed Mr. Block to point out to the Foreign Minister the urgent importance of finding some remedy for this deplorable state of things, and to leave with his Excellency a précis of the information contained in the inclosed despatch. In carrying out my instructions Mr. Block also urged the Minister, as well as the Grand Vizier, to hasten the appointment of a Governor-General, as the present acting Vali did not seem to be a man of much energy or ability, and to send supplies of grain to the famine-stricken districts.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that he would cause inquiry to be made with regard to the information supplied by Major Melvill, that the Vali of Diarbekir had already been instructed to send supplies of grain to Mosul, and that the question of appointing a Governor-General was before the Council of Ministers. No decision had, however, as yet, been arrived at. The Grand Vizier's observations were to the same effect.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 10.

Acting Consul-General Melvill to Sir N. O'Conor.

Bagdad, November 28, 1898.

Sir,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 527, dated the 23rd October last, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have received a report from the Consular Agent at Mosul regarding the alleged sale of Christian children to Mahommedans in consequence of the famine prevailing in that district.

2. It appears that, while it is not true that the Christians have been actually selling their children, the condition of affairs at Mosul and in the vicinity has not been exaggerated by the Rev. D. Jenks. In consequence of the prolonged famine there the Christians have been reduced to the greatest want, and in their inability to provide food for their families, over 1,500 children have been made over to Mahommedans as domestic servants or otherwise.

In these circumstances it is not surprising to learn that there is clear evidence that numbers of the girls have already been seduced or raped, and the Consular Agent expresses the opinion that the children will either be persuaded or forced to embrace Islam. In this opinion I fully concur.

3. To make matters worse, it is reported that the local authorities have been, and are, pressing the Christians for payment of taxes due by the latter and also by other Christians who have left that part of the country in consequence of the famine.

When collecting, or attempting to collect, the taxes, the local officials and zaptiehs behave, it is said, with the greatest brutality, selling up the few remaining possessions of the Christians at nominal prices and insisting on the people providing them with food and their horses with fodder.

It is also reported that the country is overrun by bands of thieves, who plunder the people of what has escaped the notice of the officials, and have rendered the roads unsafe for caravans, and that the local authorities make no effort to suppress this lawlessness.

I must mention, however, that I have recently received information that the authorities at Mosul have been arranging for the import of grain into that part of the country.

4. I fear that the account given by the Consular Agent is not exaggerated, for it is confirmed in essentials by two ladies of the Church Missionary Society, who have recently returned to Bagdad from Mosul.

5. I am informed that the Dominican Fathers at Mosul have been very active in relieving the distress, so far as lay in their power, and have already spent some £T. 3,500 (which they obtained from charitable people in France) in the work. I am also informed that at least £T. 6,000 are required for the relief of

starving people during the next six months, and that it can hardly be expected that the Dominicans will be able to collect more than half of that sum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. J. MELVILL, *Major,*
Acting British Consul-General, Bagdad.

No. 11.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 16.)
Constantinople, January 17, 1899.

My Lord,

IN my despatch No. 2 of the 4th instant I had the honour to inform your Lordship of the steps that I had taken to draw the attention of the Porte to the condition of the Armenian population, as reported to me by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, and especially to the suffering which would be caused by the collection of the military exemption tax.

I have now the honour to inclose to your Lordship herewith two further despatches which I have received from Mr. Jones reporting on the situation.

On the receipt of these reports, from which it appeared that the military exemption tax was about to be levied, and that troops were to be employed as tax-collectors, I communicated with the Armenian Patriarch, who informed me that an Imperial Iradé had just been issued granting one year's adjournment for the collection of the tax.

With regard to the employment of troops as tax-collectors, I have instructed Mr. Jones to point out to the Vali unofficially that such a measure is forbidden by Article 30 of the Annex to the Vizierial letter of October 1895.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 11.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 40.)
Kharput, December 28, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that some anxiety is felt amongst the Armenians of this city at the present time in consequence of a rumour to the effect that in accordance with instructions received from Constantinople the local authorities are about to form a troup, "alay," from the Mahommedan clergy, "ulamá," of the district, an anxiety which is only too well grounded if the report be true (and I have reason to suppose that it is probably not without foundation) in view of the fact that it was that class of the Mahommedan population that displayed the greatest zeal in butchering the Christians at the time of the massacres.

The survivors of that period of terror not unnaturally reason that to put arms into the hands of that fanatical and bloodthirsty class is to encourage them to repeat the atrocities of two years ago.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 11.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)
Kharput, December 30, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that great consternation has been caused amongst the Christian rayahs of this province by the decision of the local authorities to collect [illegible] them at the present time the military commutation tax, "bedeli askeri," with full [illegible]

[illegible] the collection of the tax in question was [illegible] the destitute condition to which so many [illegible]

This decision on the part of the authorities, whether taken on their own initiative or in obedience to direct instructions from the Central Government, is especially unfortunate at the present juncture, when the hardships of life for the poor peasants, which are already rendered severe by the rigorous winter season, are intensified by the high price and scarcity of provisions (referred to in my despatch No. 37 of the 6th instant), and the prevalence of a disease which has carried off large numbers of their cattle.

The fears entertained by the Armenian population respecting the intention of the Government to enforce payment of the tax in question have now been realized, and I am informed that soldiers have been sent to different villages as tax-collectors.

The outlook for the native Christian peasantry thus seems almost hopeless, and, moreover, any attempt by the authorities to enforce payment of the tax with arrears from those Armenians who are already on the verge of starvation, must redound ultimately to the disadvantage of the Government itself, a consideration which I ventured to put before the Vali of the province on the 28th instant, on which occasion his Excellency replied that the state of the destitute poor would be taken into consideration, but that the period of delay having elapsed measures must now be taken to collect the tax.

To drive people who have barely enough for their own subsistence into actual starvation is to deprive the Government of a source of revenue which a wise forbearance would foster and enable to rise at least to the condition of relative prosperity that obtained before the recent troubles.

With regard to the proportion of the Armenian villagers who would be reduced to absolute destitution by the enforcement of this tax, I am told that they would form 75 per cent. of the whole Armenian rural population, but would fain hope that this estimate is exaggerated.

Unfavourable as the prospects are for the whole province there are certain districts in which the Armenians are especially exposed to the rapacity and cruelty of the officials.

The districts referred to are those of Husni Mansûr and Behesni, with regard to the first named of which I am informed from a reliable source that the local controller of revenue, "Mal Mudiri," had stated that he would send a sum amounting to £ T. 450 to Kharput before March, and when asked how this could be done replied that he would use the cane to attain his object. The people of Behesni, where some Armenians had succeeded for a time in keeping their names concealed from the authorities, are now called upon to pay even the arrears owing from persons who died long ago, a demand manifestly unjust.

His Excellency, to whom I mentioned in a general way the hardships inflicted on the Armenian population of those two districts, though he threw doubt on the accuracy of my information, stated that he would telegraph to his subordinates there with regard to the matter. I fear, however, that the outlook for both of those districts is especially dark, even as compared with that of the district in the immediate neighbourhood of this city.

The Governor-General, though not inhuman as, it is to be feared, his subordinates at Husni Mansur and Behesni must be described, has evidently decided to bring pressure to bear upon the Armenians in order to enforce payment of the military commutation tax, as he gave me to understand that the revenues of the province had decreased by a sum amounting to 80,000*l*. He is probably sincere in his wish to leave the very poor unmolested, but by sending the soldiers to collect the tax his Excellency adopts a course of action which is almost certain to cause great suffering amongst the peasantry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 12.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 17.)
Constantinople, January 19, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 662 of the 21st ultimo I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith two further reports which I have received from Mr. Consul Devey on the subject of affairs in the Yemen.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

These reports confirm the news of the capture of Shahel, an important post of the insurgent Arabs. 4,000 Arabs and 3,600 Turks are stated to have been killed in the operations, besides a loss to the Turkish forces of two battalions, who, it is rumoured, deserted to the enemy.

The news of the capture of Shahel has been published in the Turkish press, which celebrates the complete defeat of the insurgents, and announces the impending collapse of the insurrection.

It is announced further that the authorities of this province are distributing flour in the famine-stricken districts, and that they are organizing a force of gendarmerie composed of natives officered by Turks to keep order in the interior.

I have ascertained that the officer in command of the troops employed in the Yemen has pressed for the dispatch of recruits to complete his battalions—a request natural enough in view of his severe losses.

The Minister of War, however, declined, as I hear, to accede to this suggestion, on the ground that there are at present more troops than are necessary to cope with any emergency. I am informed that his Excellency has expressed the personal opinion that a continuance of military operations is useless, and that a policy of justice and civilization is the best means of pacifying the disturbed districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 12.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 129.)
Sir,
Jeddah, December 8, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 126 I have the honour to report that the Acting Vice-Consul at Hodeida, writing on the 2nd instant, informs me that "the Turkish soldiers took possession of Shahel, and about 4,000 Arabs and above 2,000 soldiers were killed during the battle.

He will send all details of the fight by next mail.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 12.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 132.)
Sir,
Jeddah, December 26, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 129, I have the honour to report that the Acting Vice-Consul at Hodeida sends the following details in reference to the victory of the Turks at Shahel:—

"First, Ahmed Pasha and Hadi Pasha, Chief of the Intelligence Department, with eight battalions, went from Kofol to Shahel, and they surrounded the place.

"They had several fights with the Arabs. On the first, 700 Turkish soldiers were killed; on the second, 400; and on the third, 200, besides those killed in other places. On their way to Shahel they left two battalions at Dama, and these deserted and joined the rebels.

"The Mushir Abdulla Pasha, seeing that Ahmed Pasha and Hadi Pasha could not take the place, left Sanaa for Haggia with twenty battalions, and from there he went to Dama, which is situated between Haggia, Haguir, and Uddafur. Shahel is in the midst of them.

"From Dama he proceeded to Shahel by a different route.

"He took two days to climb the mountain, marching only in night-time. He reached the top of the mountain, and took Shahel on Wednesday night, the 30th November.

"During the two days' march and the night of the battle, 2,500 soldiers were killed. 1,000 Arabs were killed at the fight.

News came to Hodeida next day that the Turks took Shahel, and 4,000 Arabs were killed, and the authorities celebrated the victory.

"After the battle, the Mushir left two battalions at Shahel, two at Beni Abdullah, and two at Benijul; and he proceeded with the rest of the troops to Benikad, which place he besieged.

"The two battalions left at Benijul were attacked by the Arabs, and the Turks had to run away.

"Shahel is a line of mountains two hours' distance long. On these mountains there are Shahel, Benijul, and Beni Abdullah. At the foot of the last mountain there is Benikad, which is the road to the east, where there are a lot of tribes. One of these is called Hascet, with 70,000 inhabitants, besides others with the name of Bakil, Nehem, Ju Mohamed, Ju Hossein, Jusuphian, &c.

"If the Mushir succeeds to cross all these tribes, he can reach Saada, Madam, and Kifelet Adar. These last two places are the strongholds of Hamed Uddin."

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 13.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 22.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, January 19, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to inclose to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Major Massy, Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, reporting on conversations which he has had with Suleiman Pasha, the General Commanding at Khanas, and imparting his views on the general political situation.

In view of the language which Major Massy reports himself as holding, I have thought it desirable to write to him privately that he is not called upon to discuss general political questions with the local authorities, and that it is not advisable that he should do so.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 1.)
Sir,
Erzeroum, January 5, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that Suleiman Pasha, General Commanding at Khanas, proceeded to Erzinghian some three weeks ago, where he will pass the winter, returning to his post next spring. He dined with me twice during the few days he spent here, and he assured me that these were the only occasions upon which he had desired to go into European society, as he felt he was amongst friends at my Consulate, and, on his part, he desired to show his friendly feeling towards England. I accompanied him on his way, some two hours' ride, preparing luncheon for him at a village on the road, which gave him much pleasure.

In course of conversation, he expressed himself very freely regarding Russia, showing a strong feeling against that country. He is a Circassian. Alluding to the defences of Erzeroum, and the possible proposal of the Yildiz Commission, he expressed his contempt for the present, as well as for any future system of defence, saying that they were as nothing, unless the men were there ready. Then, kneeling down, as in the act of firing, he added: "That is the best system of defensive works," and, waving his hand in a circle north and south of Erzeroum, he said: "Those are the ways they will come, not by Erzeroum." In that case, I asked, ought not things to be made ready in those directions, and I pointed out some of the admirable sites for defensive works—on the road towards Erzinghian—which I had myself noticed last spring. He did not say that any plan had yet been conceived for such defences, but I gained the impression from him that he had mentally noted my observations.

I then alluded to the feud existing between the civil and military departments in this vilayet, for which Zekki Pasha, Commanding the 4th Army Corps at Erzinghian, is doubtless not a little to blame, as the strong supporter of the lawless Kurds who set at nought the Governor-General's authority. I said that all officials, both civil and military, whom I had met, impressed me most favourably, while I heard much good spoken of them.

The province, also, was capable of great and wealthy development. It was undoubtedly the most important, politically, in Asiatic Turkey, and, on one condition, could be made the strongest bulwark of the Empire, that condition being the realization of the Belgian motto: "L'Union fait la Force." Where dissension reigned, be it in an Empire, in a province, or in an Administration, there lay great danger in the future. I added no more, but Suleiman Pasha smiled, and said that he understood. I then said that if he would make Zekki Pasha understand this, and the necessity for bringing about this union, before it was too late, our meeting would have been productive of great good. He replied: "Our meeting and friendship is better than the value of tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds." As he is the nephew of Zekki Pasha, I hope that this conversation may be productive of good results, although it is difficult to form a perfectly exact opinion as to Zekki Pasha's real intentions and designs.

Suleiman Pasha told me that in the spring Shakir Pasha was to pay Zekki Pasha a visit, and that I must then come also to Erzinghian as his guest, so that we might all meet. If Shakir Pasha does go to pay this visit, I shall also endeavour to proceed to Erzinghian at the same time, and renew my acquaintance with him and Zekki Pasha, both of whom I know already. It will be strange if, then, I cannot gain an insight into what those two individuals really have in their heads, regarding which there appear to be many various opinions. They and their subordinates all drink freely, and in their cups become confidential. Moreover, such a meeting could not but be productive of a good result, just at the season when the Kurds, after a hard winter, are on the point of again starting their predatory tactics. I might, indirectly, warn Zekki Pasha of the folly and danger, on his part, of not keeping these gentlemen within bounds, inasmuch as they contribute nothing, practically, towards the revenue of these provinces, while the real tax-payers will soon be reduced by them to utter beggary, so that nearly all revenue must cease. The result must be either ruin or very energetic measures, in which he himself stands a good chance of going to the wall.

Rahmi Pasha, Commanding the 11th Cavalry Brigade at Kara Kelissé, summoned by Zekki Pasha, has lately proceeded to Erzinghian, but for what purpose I have not yet ascertained. It may be in connection with the proposal of Yildiz to construct fresh defensive works, and this we shall know as soon as the snow melts—in April.

Hussameddin Bey, Chief Staff Officer of the Zrzeroum Division, is at present on tour of inspection of all the Russian frontier posts, from Riza to Bayazid. I gather that this is a usual annual inspection, somewhat late this year owing to the manœuvres which took place here this last summer. At the same time, it may be partly connected with inquiries as to defensive measures to be commenced in the spring. I shall not fail to report again on this subject when opportunity for ascertaining arises.

From what Suleiman Pasha told me, however, I formed the opinion that this question had already been made the subject of inquiries, and that the opinion formed was that Erzeroum fortress is strong enough, while all future efforts should be turned towards defending the roads north and south.

In my opinion, this fortified town is strong enough, provided the necessary guns and ammunition are in the forts when wanted, which is certainly not the case at present.

The wave of Suleiman Pasha's hand north and south, also gave me the impression that he is fully alive to the possibility of Erzeroum being turned from both those directions, and he went so far even as to mention Trebizond as a point from which danger might be expected.

Mehmet Ali Pasha, Commanding the Erzeroum garrison, spoke freely to me, also, a few days ago, as to Russian designs, and both he and Suleiman Pasha appear to share the opinion that England's prompt and decisive action in the Black Sea, could alone save this country from ultimate absorption by their northern enemy in case of war.

I trust that what I have here stated may prove of interest to your Excellency, as well as to our Military Attaché at Constantinople, and to the Director of Military Intelligence, to whom may I beg that this report may be fowarded.

The Armenian question appears to me to be merged, just at present, into others of far greater interest and importance, namely, the relations between this country and Russia, the economical state of these Eastern provinces, and the Kurdish question. That the Armenian question is dead, I do not believe. Just as before, it was raised by Russian intrigue, so now, again, it is dormant until Russian intrigue again raises it when a favourable occasion arises. In the meantime, other agencies will be active, such as the Macedonian and Kurdish questions, to increase the weakness and impecuniosity of this Empire. Even here there are murmurs of discontent heard as to the loss of Crete and the likelihood of troubled times in Macedonia this spring. The greatest poverty prevails, in some districts to starvation, caused by Kurdish plunderers, who do not leave even the means of tilling the soil for the next year's crop. It must continue and increase until the final downfall of this Administration comes, some day, and this is the opportunity for which Russia now waits. The Russian Consular officials tell me openly that no war is necessary unless Russia is pushed to it against her will, through war with England, elsewhere. Otherwise, the desire is time for the completion of the various railway undertakings, which will make them strong enough to cope with us in every direction, with good chances of success.

Wee need not look, therefore, for any attack in this direction, in my opinion, unless Russia's hand is forced by England, at least for several years to come.

Owing to these reasons, I refrain from troubling your Excellency with petty details of pillage, oppression, or local injustice. Such reports can produce no good results. I can obtain justice locally, by friendly intervention, when necessary, owing to my good relations with the local authorities, the Governor-General being an exceptionally good official.

I shall not fail, however, to keep your Excellency informed as to the exact condition of my Consular district, as well as to endeavour to discuss the more important questions above mentioned, which are of the greatest interest to England, politically, in connection with the Eastern provinces of Kurdistan, and within which the Armenian now lies.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 14.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 23.)
Foreign Office, January 26, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 10 of the 7th instant relative to the famine in the district of Mosul.

I approve the representations made by Mr. Block to the Turkish Government in accordance with your Excellency's instructions.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 15.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. OConor.

(No. 24.)
Foreign Office, January 26, 1899.

Sir,

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith, for your observations, a copy of a letter from the Armenian Relief Committee relative to the claim against the Porte in respect of the money robbed from Yussuf Yunnan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Armenian Relief Committee to Foreign Office.

Grosvenor House, London, January 14, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to previous correspondence on the subject of the recovery of the money robbed from the late Yussuf Yunnan in regard to which Sir Nicholas O'Conor has made representations to the Porte, I am directed by the Committee to inform you that if the Porte will pay the sum of £ T. 400 to Sir J. W. Whittall, Treasurer of the Armenian Relief Committee at Constantinople, the claim against the Ottoman Government preferred by this Committee will be regarded as satisfied. It is hoped that payment may be demanded by Her Majesty's Ambassador, or steps taken to insure a compliance with the notes addressed by Sir Philip Currie and Sir Nicholas O'Conor.

I am to add that should the Marquess of Salisbury see difficulties in the way of enforcing payment, a notification of his Lordship's decision may be communicated to this Committee.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWARD ATKIN.

No. 16.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 4.)
Tehran, January 10, 1899.

My Lord,

HER Majesty's Consul-General at Tabriz informs me that he reported to your Lordship, in his despatch No. 18 of the 10th December, 1898, the massacre of nine Armenian travellers by the troops of the Governor of Khoi.

I have brought this matter to the notice of his Highness the Sadr-i-Azam, and I am glad to say that he seems really shocked and disgusted at the Governor's action. Whether he will be able to prevent the recurrence of such brutalities is another question, for it becomes daily more evident that he is no longer able to make his orders respected as they used to be. But I think that if he can he will do so.

The massacre created a feeling of consternation among the Armenians in Tehran, and their Bishop appealed to me for help. I have done all I can in the matter, and will continue to assist them, unofficially, as far as possible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. M. DURAND.

No. 17

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 29.)
Constantinople, February 2, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Sir William White's despatches No. 188 of the 22nd May, 1889, and No. 215 of the 3rd July of the same year, I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship herewith the documents which throw an interesting light on the measures taken recently by Russia to consolidate her religious and political influence in Palestine.

As your Lordship will observe, the object of Russia is stated to be to destroy the influence in Palestine of the Greek Œcumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and to put that of Russia in its place. With this object it is intended to subvert the Greek Patriarchate at Jerusalem, as at present constituted, and to substitute for it, first, a body of native Greek Orthodox clergy, under the rule of a native as Patriarch, instead of a Prelate of Greek origin, and finally to appoint a Russian as Patriarch of Jerusalem.

The immediate object in hand is the Patriarchate of Syria or Antioch, and Russia, after expelling the Greek Patriarch nominee of the Œcumenical Patriarch, appears now to have succeeded in bringing about an absolute deadlock in the election of his successor, whom Russia intends to be a native of Syria, independent of the Œcumenical Patriarch, and subject to Russian influence. Mr. Richards' despatch of the 6th December and Mr. Block's Memorandum show clearly how this result has been attained.

In a later despatch Mr. Richards points to the main source of Russian influence, namely, the Palestine Society, presided over by a Grand Duke, and with a member of the Foreign Office serving *ex officio* on the Committee, which has been able, by expending upwards of 6,000*l.* a-year, to gradually procure control over all the Orthodox schools in the north of Syria.

I have reason to believe that these proceedings of Russia are seriously occupying the attention of the French Government, and that the new French Ambassador, M. Constans, is by no means inclined to follow the quiescent policy of M. Hanotaux in this respect.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 17.

Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 70. Confidential.)
Jerusalem, December 6, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that a few days ago Mgr. Photios, Archbishop of Philadelphia and Secretary to the Greek Patriarchate in this city, had an interview with me which he desired should be considered as confidential, and stated the following facts in regard to the action of Russia in seeking to promote her influence in Palestine and Syria, through the Russian "Palestine Society."

The steps taken by Russia with this object in view have already formed the subject of reports from my predecessor, but they have more especially been commented upon in his despatch to Sir William White No. 12 of the 22nd June, 1889.

As the policy of Russia in this respect tends to the ultimate subversion of the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem, and the substitution, first, of a body of native Greek Orthodox clergy, as the "Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre," under the rule of a native as Patriarch, instead of a Prelate of Greek origin, and, finally, the appointment of a Russian as Patriarch, this policy has caused not a little alarm among the members of the Greek Patriarchate, which has recently been on the increase.

The reason for this increasing apprehension is to be traced to the measures adopted by Russia with reference to the Greek Patriarchate of Antioch, whose Patriarchal See is at Damascus. In my despatch No. 4 of the 25th January, 1892, I reported the appointment of Mgr. Spiridon, the Acting Bishop of Bethlehem, as Patriarch of Antioch, and, not long afterwards, M. Bélaïew, Secretary to the Russian Consulate-General in this city, was named Russian Consul at Damascus. At the same time, I am informed the Russian "Palestine Society" opened a school and dispensary at Damascus, and has interested itself much in the welfare of the Greek Orthodox community in that city. Through the intrigues of M. Bélaïew—so Mgr. Photios tells me—the Greek Patriarch, Spiridon, found his position at Damascus untenable, and the native Greeks of that city were worked up to such a pitch of excitement against him that, a little more than a year ago, he was obliged to give up his office and flee to the Convent of Seydnaya, about four hours' distance from Damascus, where for a time he took refuge and then proceeded to Constantinople. Since then no Patriarch has been elected to the vacant chair, but I am informed by Mgr. Photios that the delay in the nomination of a successor to Mgr. Spiridon has been the result of the persistent opposition and intrigues of the Russian Palestine Society, through the Russian Consul, M. Bélaïew, who offers every resistance to the choice of a candidate of Greek origin, whereas the Patriarchate here and the majority of the clergy at Damascus are as determined, on their side, to prevent the appointment of a native Prelate. Matters are consequently at a standstill, and how long the election of the Patriarch will be deferred is uncertain, but Mgr. Photios greatly fears that such pressure will be brought to bear by the Russian Government, both on the Patriarchate here and on that at Damascus, by the withholding of the donations and contributions which from time to time arrive from Russia, as well as the revenues of the Church from Bessarabia, that there is a possibility of Russia finally gaining the day.

Should such be the result, and Russia be successful in procuring the election of a native Syrian as Greek Orthodox Patriarch at Damascus, it will pave the way for further intrigues and attempts to overthrow the Greek Orthodox Patriarch in this city. Already in former years Russia endeavoured, by refusing to recognize the election of the Patriarch Procopius, to create a schism in the Greek Church in Palestine, and, subsequently, on the nomination of the Patriarch Nicodemus, she agreed to his appointment on condition that he promised to carry out certain arrangements favourable to Russian policy. This promise he afterwards found he was unable to fulfil, and he was consequently obliged to send in his resignation.

According to Mgr. Photios, the majority of the clergy at Damascus desire to elect as Patriarch one of the Prelates in this city, as was done during the last election, but they cannot as yet agree to put forward the name of their candidate, as they fear that some pretext may be found by Russia for upsetting their choice. Under these circumstances, Mgr. Photios suggests whether it might not be possible for some influence to be brought to bear upon the Porte to favour the nomination of a candidate of Greek origin, and not a native of the country, and thus to arrest the advances made by Russia to acquire control over the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastics in Syria and Palestine. Should she be successful in having eventually a Patriarch at Jerusalem chosen from among the native Prelates, she would enlist the sympathies of the native Greek Orthodox community throughout the land on her side, and the transition to the nomination of a Russian Patriarch of Jerusalem would be easy. The acquisition then of the different sanctuaries would follow as a matter of course, and the Russian Patriarch would, as Mgr. Photios expresses it, be backed by Russian bayonets in the exalted position which he would occupy.

The above-mentioned statements of Mgr. Photios, taken in connection with the fact that the Russian "Palestine Society" is understood to have *ex officio* in its Council Representatives of the Russian Foreign Office, assume some importance, and I venture to report them to your Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 17.

Memorandum by Mr. Block.

WITH reference to Mr. Consul Dickson's No. 70, Confidential, respecting Russia and the Greek Patriarchate in Syria, the present opposition of the election of a Patriarch of Antioch is as follows.

The regular mode of election is for the Saint Synod of Syria (Antioch) to ask the Œcumenical Patriarch at Constantinople for a list of three candidates from among whom one shall be chosen by the Saint Synod.

The Saint Synod of Syria is composed of twelve members: the Metropolitans of Peleokia, Tarsus and Adana, Beyrout, Laodicœa, Tripoli, Aleppo, Amidi, Arcadia, Amessa, Tyre, and Sidon, Jeronopolios, and Gavranio.

The *locum tenens* is the Metropolitan of Tarsus and Adana, and he, with the Metropolitans of Amidi, Aleppo, Arcadia, and Jeronopolios, desire the nomination of a Greek Raya other than a native as Patriarch of Syria.

M. Bélaïew, Russian Consul at Damascus, is actively engaged in urging the majority of seven to name as Patriarch a native of Syria, whom they would use as an instrument to promote Russian policy in the country, and to eliminate candidates of the Œcumenical Patriarch at Constantinople.

The Œcumenical Patriachate has already made a concession by allowing the Saint Synod of Jerusalem to make a list of candidates including Greek Prelates of Jerusalem or of the Œcumenical Patriarchate; but the Russian Consul has maintained his opposition and for the moment has on his side seven members of the Saint Synod of Syria.

The matter was referred to the Sublime Porte which instructed Nazim Pasha, Governor-General of Syria, to invite the *locum tenens* and the members of the Synod to propose a list of candidates. The Vali, who seems to side with the Russian Consul (and possibly authorized by the Palace), carried out his instructions in a half-hearted manner, and gave an opportunity to the dissentient majority to reply that, as the Saint Synod, after invoking Divine inspiration by prayer, had already drawn up a *procès-verbal* excluding Greek candidates, they could not go back on their decision, as it would not be permitted by the canons of the religious law. This answer was referred to the Ministry of Public Worship, which inquired of the Œcumenical Patriarchate whether this reply was valid. His Holiness replied that the prayers recited before the *procès-verbal* (which was not signed) were without value and were not of the category, which would prevent, according to the canons of the Church, a reversal of the decision. This answer was given a week ago, and the matter is still under discussion at the Sublime Porte.

A representative of the Saint Sepulchre and of the Patriarchate of Antioch, a certain Mgr. Apostolatos, under instructions from the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Œcumenical Patriarch as well as on his own behalf, has proposed to the Minister of Justice and the Grand Vizier two methods for overcoming the difficulty:—

Firstly, to send categorical instructions to the Vali of Syria telling him to insist on the production by the Saint Synod of a list of candidates including Greek Prelates other than native.

Secondly, to send provisionally another Vali to Syria to settle the question.

There is a precedent for the latter alternative, as Nazim Pasha himself was sent to Jerusalem to settle the difficulty concerning the Saint Synod there.

If either of these alternatives are adopted, the Metropolitans of Siliokia, Arcadia, and Tyre and Sidon, will vote with the minority of the Saint Synod, which thus becomes a majority (eight to four), and the election will be made. These three Prelates will be the more disposed to alter their opinion as the Greek Government has approached them on

the subject. Their present attitude is due to the pressure put upon them by M. Bulaïew and the want of energy shown by the local authorities.

M. Bélaïew further insists that at the election of the Patriarch ten laymen should also take part in order that, if the majority of clerics is against him, he may still succeed. The addition of lay members to the electoral body of the Patriarchate of Syria is an innovation and would constitute a precedent solely intended to increase Russian influence in Syria.

Your Excellency will have observed that some time ago some thirty or forty schools in Northern Syria passed under the control of the Russian Palestine Society. The Œcumenical Patriarchate here states that they were misled by promises of financial support on the part of the Society; it now appears that Russian professors have been appointed to teach the Russian language, and though the Œcumenical Patriarchate and the Porte object to these political propaganda under the guise of education, the Russian Consul has now complete control over the schools. This was the first step; the second is the present attempt to elect a native as Patriarch of Syria, favourable to Russian interests. The Œcumenical Patriarch here and the Patriarch of Jerusalem fear that, if this attempt be successful, the next step will be to control the election of the Patriarch at Jerusalem, and thus to assure the predominance of Russian influence in Syria.

I hear that the French are somewhat nervous as to the activity of Russian Agents in a country where her influence was paramount, and have hinted to the Porte that the proceedings of the Russian Consuls should be opposed, although, owing to their political relations with Russia at the present moment, they dare not openly counteract their policy.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

January 26, 1899.

Inclosure 3 in No. 17.

Memorandum by Mr. Blech respecting the Greek Patriarch of Antioch.

MGR. SPIRIDON was elected in 1892. His election was a victory for the Hellenic, as opposed to the native Greek party, which, as a rule, makes common cause with the adherents of Russia. But so feeble was the character of his Beatitude, that under his auspices the Russians succeeded in practically obtaining control of the educational work of the Greek Orthodox community in Damascus and its surrounding district. The Patriarch complained to the Vali of Russian encroachments, but eventually means were found to satisfy his Beatitude, and the Russians obtained control of the large female school at Damascus.

Consul Eyres, No 13, April 23, 1896.

The Russian "Société de Palestine" has lately taken over and inaugurated eleven schools, and intend to obtain control of the whole Greek educational system in Syria.

Ibid., No. 24, July 8 1896.

Greeks have withdrawn their children from British Mission schools, and they now attend the Greek schools.

The Greek Patriarch of Antioch has written to the Russian Consul that he can no longer permit the supervision and control exercised by Russian Consuls over the Greek Orthodox schools in his diocese, and intends to resume possession of them at once.

Consul Richards, No. 53, October 2, 1897.

The Greek community are about to present a Petition to the Vali praying for the deposition of the Patriarch.

A meeting of Bishops decided to depose the Patriarch, and the Bishop of Tarsus, Mgr. Germanos, was elected to take over temporary charge.

Ibid., No. 1, January 10, 1898

The Vali supports the deposition. The Œcumenical is inclined to interfere.

Ibid., No. 3 January 29, 1898.

The Patriarch has resigned. The Vali and local authorities favour the election of a Greek "raya," as less amenable to Russian influence than a Syrian, who would, however, be preferred by the mass of the people.

Ibid., No. 6. February 20, 1898.

An Imperial Iradé has been received, ordering that the election of a Patriarch should be strictly confined to candidates within the Province of Antioch, candidates from other Sees being ineligible. This is a great triumph for the native party. The electoral college was elected, but Mgr. Germanos, refusing to agree to the election of certain members, was deposed, and Mgr. Meleteus, Bishop of Latakia, was appointed in his stead.

Ibid., No. 27, May 25, 1898.

(Signed) E. C. BLECH.

June 12, 1898.

Inclosure 4 in No. 17.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 3. Confidential.)

Damascus, January 17, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to Consul Eyres' despatches Nos. 13 and 24 of the 23rd April and the 8th July, 1896, respectively, I have the honour to submit a few observations concerning the steady advance of Russian influence over the Greek Orthodox educational establishments in this province.

Your Excellency is doubtless aware that the work of "Russianizing" the Greek schools, and so, gradually, the various communities whose children are taught in those schools, is being carried on with the utmost energy and activity by Russian Consular officers under the auspices and patronage of the "Société Impériale Orthodoxe de Palestine" (to give the French translation of the Russian name), of which the Grand Duke Sergius is the President. I am informed on good authority that the Greek Orthodox schools in Syria are subsidized by this Society to the extent of a yearly (minimum) sum of £ T. 6,000, *i.e.*, 4,800*l.* From this fund salaries are paid to the Director-General of the schools, a Russian named Dimitri Bogdanoff, who resides at Damascus; to all the female teachers in the girls' school here, thirteen in number, of whom three are Russians, and the remainder are natives; to the teachers in all the boys' schools, being thirty-three in number, throughout the vilayet; to the Russian doctor residing here, Dr. Sapojkoff, who is in reality an agent of the Society; and last, but not least, to the Patriarch himself, should he prove amenable to reason and work in the interests of the Russian Government, as, it may readily be conceived, considering the inducements, he will, in all probability, do. There are, of course, many other expenses, such as the doctor's house rent and the cost of the drugs dispensed by him, the house rent of the Director-General, the rent of the building used as a girls' school here, the rent of many school buildings throughout the province, presents given to various functionaries, ecclesiastical and civil, as often as the occasion may arise, &c.

I should state that M. Dimitri Bogdanoff's sphere of action includes the Lebanon and, I believe, Beyrout, while the doctor is constantly travelling in various parts of the province, thoughout the greater part of which he is already well known, although he has only been here a little over a year. Dr. Sapojkoff dispenses medicines gratis to all and sundry who apply to him, and attends professionally, nominally only the poor, but in reality many of the well-to-do, without remuneration. Both of these officials are well paid by the Society, their respective salaries being certainly not less than £ T. 40 per month.

As regards the schools—which, it should be noted, are not recognized officially as Russian schools in the sense in which similar establishments belonging to British and French Missions are so recognized—all of those now existing in this vilayet, as well as those in the Mutessariflik of the Lebanon (not to mention those in the Provinces of Beyrout and Palestine, with which I have no concern), are financed by the Palestine Society. They are therefore in reality Russian, though nominally only Greek, schools. The teachers, as stated above, are paid by the Society, and where the funds procurable locally are not sufficient for the purpose, the rent of the school-room and the cost of firing are generally forthcoming from the same source. In Damascus it is more especially the girls' school—numbering about 450 scholars, including 50 small boys—which is essentially a Russian establishment, the three principal teachers being Russian ladies, who are in receipt of liberal salaries, the senior getting £ T. 12, and the other two £ T. 7 each per month. There are, in addition, ten native female teachers, whose salaries range from 25 fr. to 55 fr. per month, a scale of remuneration which, in view of the sex and social position of the recipients, is considered high in this country. The Russian language is obligatory in this as well as in the boys' school, an hour being devoted every day to its study. The native teachers are also obliged to learn this language out of school hours. I am told that it is astonishing to witness the glibness with which even very small girls and boys will "rattle along" in the newly-acquired language. In both the boys' and girls' schools here in Damascus, and, I believe, throughout the vilayet, school books are supplied gratis, which is not the case in any other schools in the country. Such books are not, of course, taken away by the scholar when his education is completed.

Until quite recently it was customary to supply the poorest children with two dresses a-year each, but this dole has been discontinued, at all events in Damascus, during the last six months. In some authenticated cases money has been offered to parents to

induce them to remove their children from British Mission schools to those under Russian protection. It is within my own personal experience that nearly all the children who used to attend our Mission school in the village of Bludan, in the Ante Lebanon are now being taught in the Greek (read "Russian") school recently established there. This, I am assured by competent persons, is only one instance out of many which might be cited.

I might mention that for a long time the Russian Consular Dragoman here was the officially recognized "Wakeel" or agent for the Damascus schools—both boys and girls—on behalf of the Greek Orthodox community, to which he belongs. It was while he was acting in this capacity that he induced the ex-Patriarch Spiridon to hand over the whole control and administration of the girls' school to his chief, my Russian colleague, M. Bélaïew. About eighteen months ago, however, the Vali received orders from Constantinople to intimate to the Dragoman that he, being in the employment of a foreign authority, could no longer be allowed to act as "agent" for—nominally, at all events—Ottoman schools; whereupon the Dragoman was, much against his will and that of his chief, forced to resign. I am not aware that in reality the change effected had any substantial consequences, but, at all events, from the Turkish official point of view, appearances were saved.

Russian influence remains the same, or, rather, gains in strength almost daily, and it would hardly be any exaggeration to say that steady and persistent efforts are being made to "Russianize" the whole of the rising generation among the Greek Orthodox communities in this province. To this congenial and patriotic task my Russian colleague has devoted himself *con amore*, showing an energy and enthusiasm which, from the point of view of his Government, are beyond all praise, and of which it has shown its grateful recognition in the form of decorations and letters of approval received by M. Bélaiew on several occasions.

As regards the people themselves, it is a little difficult to guage their real sentiments on this subject. Many of them are, or appear to be, indifferent to the spread of Russian influence, while others, perhaps the majority, allow their feelings of gratitude for the very real financial assistance received to override other sentiments, such as, *e.g.*, a desire for independence and distrust of the foreigner, which, under other circumstances, would have had very considerable weight with them. There is also a minority, consisting very often of the most intelligent members of the various communities to which they belong, who at heart, and sometimes openly, resent this Russian intrusion into the educational life of their children. Such men ask why their boys, and more especially their girls, should be forced to learn a comparatively useless language like Russian at a time when a thorough knowledge, first, of their own most difficult tongue, and, afterwards, of either French or English, would be far more profitable to them.

I will mention, in conclusion, a fact, which is trifling in itself, but which among Orientals has a certain significance of its own, and that is that both the Director-General (M. Bogdanoff) and the Russian female teachers are accompanied by a cavass when they drive about the city, a privilege which is only enjoyed by Consuls and high ecclesiastical dignitaries, and which has not hitherto been accorded to any other foreigners engaged in the work of either religious or civil education.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 18.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 33.)

Berlin, February 3, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that it is stated in the "North German Gazette" of the 1st instant that the Sultan of Turkey issued an Iradé on the 29th ultimo, granting to the German Anatolian Railway Company the right to construct a large commercial harbour at Haidar Pasha.

The "Kölnische Zeitung" makes the following remarks in this connection:—

"This news is not only of great importance for the Anatolian Railway, but is also a further proof of the extent to which the Sultan appreciates German industry and commerce. The fact that the construction of the harbour has been finally sanctioned may be regarded as a satisfactory result of the Emperor's recent journey to the East. The present arrangements for landing at this end of the railway line are altogether insufficient; and the construction of a large and secure commercial harbour will be of great importance for the further development of the railway, which is principally worked by German capital. The plans for the construction of the harbour are already completed."

The same paper confirms the report that the Sultan has granted permission to Dr. Zender, Director of the Anatolian Railways, for the laying and working of a cable from Constantinople to Constanza, the Roumanian port on the Black Sea. Yesterday the Emperor telegraphed his thanks to the Sultan for this Concession.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 19.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 58.)
Constantinople, February 7, 1899.
My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 640 of the 8th December last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of two further despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the case of Dr. Belek.

From these it appears that the person who is generally acknowledged to have committed the outrage on Dr. Belek, namely, Kassim Agha, is at present living with a Kurdish tribe on the Persian frontier, in the enjoyment of the protection of Zekki Pasha, Commandant of the Hamidié cavalry. The same powerful protection is accorded to Hussein Pasha, who, as is generally believed, organized the outrage and received the stolen goods. On the other hand, Timur Pasha, father of Kassim Agha, has been arrested, and is now in Van.

Dr. Belek has forwarded, through Captain Maunsell, a claim for 11,340*l.* for presentation by the German Ambassador to the Sublime Porte. The claim includes £ T. 10,000 indemnity for the assault, and compensation at the rate of £ T. 20 a-day from the 16th November, 1898.

I have forwarded Dr. Belek's claim to my German colleague.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 19.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 3.)
Van, January 22, 1899.
Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Excellency, for transmission to the Imperial German Embassy, this claim of Dr. Belek, a German subject, for an indemnity from the Sublime Porte of £ T. 10,000, because of the attempt on his life by Kurds.

Your Excellency's telegram of the 28th October, 1898, mentions that His Majesty the Sultan had been pleased to sanction a suitable indemnity, and the above is the sum which Dr. Belek would wish to claim.

He also wishes to claim an indemnity of £ T. 20 per diem from the 16th November, 1898, to the present date, or £ T. 1,310 altogether, from the Turkish Government, owing to his having waited here during that period in the hope that the murderers would be brought in to trial. He has thereby lost his employment in Germany.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

Inclosure 2 in No. 19.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 4.)
Van, January 16, 1899.
Sir,

IN continuation of the case of the attempted murder of Dr. Belek, I have the honour to report that on the 31st ultimo Hajji Timur Pasha, an Hamidié officer, was brought in here in charge of an officer and some soldiers from Arjish.

He is lodged in the house of Hassan Pasha, President of the Municipality of this town, but a guard is placed over him, and when he was brought to see the Vali he was in charge of an officer and five men.

This man was not directly implicated in the outrage, as far as can be ascertained at present, although it is generally acknowledged that his son, Kassim Agha, and a servant, were the actual persons who committed the outrage on Dr. Belek.

On being interrogated before the Vali he acknowledged his son's guilt, but said he could not tell his present whereabouts as he had fled to Persia.

The latest news concerning him is that he is staying with Mustapha Bey, Chief of the Jellali Kurds, in Abagha Plain, and has been raiding sheep and corn from Armenian villages in the neighbourhood of Bergri.

Abagha is close to Persia, and part of the Jellali live on that side of the border; but the Vali tells me there would be no difficulty in arresting him, as the Jellali Kurds on this side could make those in Persia surrender him.

Kassim Agha, being a Captain of Hamidié cavalry, is directly protected by Zekki Pasha and the Commandant of Hamidié at Arjish.

Without orders from them to arrest him, the Vali and the authorities here confess themselves powerless.

It was rumoured that when Hajji Timur Pasha arrived, Hussein Pasha would also be brought in, but so far nothing has been done in his case. It is scarcely worth while bringing him here, where he would probably be treated as an honoured guest in some Pasha's house; if possible, it would be better to have both him and Hajji Timur exiled by direct Decree from Constantinople.

I insisted to the Vali that on Hussein's arrival he should be confined as a prisoner in the castle here; but he could only say that the matter must be referred to Zekki Pasha.

Two days ago Hajji Timur requested an interview with Dr. Belek, who is staying at Dr. Raynolds' house; but, acting on my advice, he refused to have any intercourse whatever with him. I thought that such an interview could lead to no good, and would be surely misrepresented in some way.

Hajji Timur is by no means as powerful or as clever a Chief as Hussein, and perhaps the latter is endeavouring to make a scapegoat of him.

I cannot but suspect that the Russians are strongly interested in supporting Hussein Pasha and preventing his exile.

The Russian Consul here has often spoken to me of the uselessness of continuing this question of attempting to get redress for the outrage on Dr. Belek; but when Hajji Timur arrived, and there was hope of Hussein also coming, he developed a sudden interest in the question which he had refrained from previously.

Whether the Russian Government, on the outbreak of war, mean to buy over Hussein and his celebrated troopers *en bloc*, or whether he is useful to them as a disturbing element to keep these provinces in a ferment, and gives them an excuse for stepping in at any time to rectify matters, it is difficult to say.

I would draw your Excellency's attention to the most serious state of distress which has arisen in this province, and which points to general famine or scarcity in the spring.

The Armenian villages are suffering most, as they had least to fall back on; but there is great distress among the Kurds as well.

It is only the great brigands, such as Hussein Pasha, who have profited much by the general robbery of the Armenians.

A Committee of Relief has been started here, with the Muavin as President, and with the sanction of the Vali, who has induced most of the rich Armenians to subscribe.

Hitherto all Committees of Christians have been forbidden as likely to be used for revolutionary purposes.

Wheat has been distributed by this Committee to some of the villages near by, where actual deaths from starvation have occurred.

I have ridden round most of the villages near Van, and can personally confirm the above statements of distress.

The worst districts are Shattakh, Mukus, Karkar, and Karchikan, to the south of the lake, where the Armenians have suffered severely, and from whence 600 refugees have recently arrived in the town.

The price of the commonest kind of bread is now 60 paras an oke in Van, whereas two years ago it was 30, and last year, at the same time, 40 paras.

Trade in the country is almost at a standstill, and no money can be gained.

The crop last year was somewhat below the average; the villagers are now consuming what they had left over for seed in the spring, and thus the distress seems likely to increase into actual famine.

Dr. Raynolds, with what relief money is at his disposal, is laying in a store of wheat at present prices, while the Local Relief Committee are dealing with the present distress as far as possible.

If available, a considerable sum will be required to meet the distress in the Armenian villages in the spring.

Dr. Raynolds has just heard from Constantinople, from the Committee there, that through some error in their accounts they previously credited him with £ T. 500 too much, and this sum has now to be made good.

I hear that neither from Persian or from the Mosul or Diarbekr Provinces is there any likelihood of assistance, as there is considerable scarcity there also.

The local Treasury is completely empty, and no help is now sent from other vilayets, as formerly, so that it is difficult to see how soldiers and officials are to be paid.

This year, during Ramazan, an unusual number of soldiers in Van have been given furlough to save the expense of feeding them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 20.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 39.)
Constantinople, February 7, 1899.

My Lord,

IN Captain Maunsell's despatch No. 4 of the 16th January, which I had the honour to inclose to your Lordship in my immediately preceding despatch of this day's date, attention is drawn to the serious state of affairs in the Province of Van, which appears to point to a general famine in the spring.

I have now the honour to transmit to your Lordship copy of a despatch which I have received from Colonel Massy, Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, which states that great distress is actually prevailing throughout the whole of Kurdistan.

As your Lordship will observe, these reports are based on personal observation, and deaths from starvation have already occurred. The price of food is already double what it was at the same season two years ago, and the villagers have already begun to consume their seed corn. This state of destitution must increase in intensity till the next harvest (that is, for eight months), and, if the seed-corn is consumed, must last indefinitely.

In communicating these reports to your Lordship, I beg to suggest that the attention of the Armenian Relief Committee should be drawn to the distress which prevails in the districts of Van and Bitlis and other parts of Armenia, and which, as I had the honour to report to your Lordship in my despatch No. 10 of the 7th ultimo, extends as far south as Mosul. It is evident that any assistance, however small, will materially help the impoverished inhabitants to sow their crops in the spring.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 20.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 4.)
Erzeroum, January 27, 1899.

Sir,

IN forwarding despatch No. 4 of Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van to your Excellency, I have the honour to state that great distress is actually prevailing throughout the whole of Kurdistan. At Kharput this almost amounts to famine, while at Bitlis, Van, Erzeroum, great poverty exists. We have to look forward to nothing better but, on the contrary, to far worse, for the next eight months, when the new harvest will be gathered.

I would appeal, through your Excellency, for the assistance of the benevolent to enable us to continue in this country the good and useful work of relief which has, in my opinion, done so much towards restoring order. It has given hope to the Christians that Europe, while discountenancing rebellion, has not quite abandoned them to Mahommedan fanaticism. I trust that our appeal may not be in vain.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 21.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 40.)
Constantinople, February 7, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch to your Lordship No. 647 of the 12th December last, I have the honour to inclose herewith a further despatch reporting on the progress of the Russian Mission to the Nestorians at Urmia.

Your Lordship will observe that an arrangement appears to have been arrived at between the Russians and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, by which the Persian mission-field will be left entirely free to the Orthodox Church. The Urmia Mission seems to regard its field of action as limited to Persian territory.

I have informed Captain Maunsell that, under the circumstances, I do not consider it necessary that he should at present undertake his proposed journey into the Nestorian country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 21.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2.)
Van, January 16, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward the following information which I have received regarding the Nestorian Christians in Persia and Turkey.

The Russian Mission in Urmia is engaged in rapidly converting the Nestorians in Persia, their operations being accelerated by the co-operation of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, and the proposed withdrawal of the latter, so as to leave the Persian mission-field entirely free to the Orthodox Church.

Some of the American Protestants and converts of the Roman Catholic Missions have also joined, and, at the present rate of progress, there will shortly be but few of the ancient Nestorian Church left in Persia.

What the exact destination of the Archbishop's Mission will be, and the ultimate arrangements made with the Russian Mission, your Excellency will doubtless know direct from London.

I hear of a proposal to establish the head-quarters of the Mission in Turkey, presumably at Van, as the most suitable place, as it would be possible to deal directly with the Vali here, while at other places in the Sandjak of Hakkiari, there would be the additional complication of working through the Mutessarif of Bashkala. The Russian priests are converting the Nestorians by easy stages, as, up to the present, they permit the use of the old liturgy, with some of the special rites.

They permit other books also, but the name of Mar Shimun and the Mattran are omitted.

It is noteworthy that they will not accept as converts boys in the schools or other inhabitants of Turkey who are residing temporarily in Persia, as they give out that they have no Mission among the Turkish Nestorians. I am quite certain, however, that when they have consolidated their position a little more in Persia, that they will extend operations into this country.

The hurried visit of M. Macfsky, the Russian Consul here, to the Nestorian country in November last, when he thought there was a likelihood of the French priests winning over that country, is one proof of this.

Mar Shimun has declared that he and his followers would rather bear ten times what they have done at the hands of Kurds and Turkish officials, rather than purchase relief by betraying their ancient religion.

What relief they hope to obtain by conversion has yet to be proved, and relief in the shape of direct protection would certainly occasion difficulties on this side of the border.

Mar Shimum is not a strong leader, and there are many sections of Nestorians who would be ready to throw in their luck with the Russians if they came. Thus divided, Mar Shimum would not be able to hold out very long.

I hope, with your Excellency's permission, to make a tour in the Nestorian country as soon as the snow clears sufficiently to open up the roads.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 22.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 10.)
Foreign Office, February 14, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your despatch No. 4 of the 10th ultimo, reporting the steps you have taken to bring to the notice of the Sadr-i-Azam the massacre of Armenian travellers by the troops of the Governor of Khoi.

I approve your action in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 23.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 20.)

(No 53.)
Constantinople, February 15, 1899.

My Lord,

IN acknowledging the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 24 of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to report that in my despatch No. 564 of the 30th October last I submitted, for your Lordship's approval, a line of action which I proposed to take in order to secure, if possible, satisfaction in the matter of the claim arising out of the murder of Yussuf Yunan at Sairt.

Your Lordship approved in your despatch No. 246 of the 15th November of the course proposed by me, which included a suggestion that a sum of 20,000 piastres should be accepted in full settlement of the claim.

I have now the honour to inform your Lordship that after a strong representation of the case which I made in conversation to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, his Excellency gave me his promise that the money would be paid. Difficulties subsequently arose when the matter was submitted to the Council of Ministers. The Council refused to approve the decision of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and it was only after I brought the question unofficially before the Sultan, and obtained an Imperial Iradé for its settlement, that the Council of Ministers could be induced to sanction the payment. The Ministers were forced eventually to rescind their previous report.

I have, however, now the satisfaction of reporting that the Minister of Finance has finally paid over to this Embassy a sum of 20,977 piastres, the equivalent of £ T. 204.

This money is at the disposal of the Armenian Relief Committee, and I shall be glad to know whether they wish it to be paid over to their Treasurer, Sir J. W. Whittall.

I trust that this settlement of this long-pending case will meet with the approval of the Armenian Relief Committee. Legally, I never thought it a good case, and I hardly expected so favourable a settlement. The chance of recovering anything through a suit at law out of the estate of the assailants of Yussuf Yunan was nil, and I consider it would be both impolitic and useless to press the matter further.

I have had to use considerable pressure to obtain a settlement of this claim, and I shall be glad for various reasons if it can be kept quiet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 24.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 49. Confidential.)
Foreign Office, February 24, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your despatch No. 53 of the 15th instant, reporting that you had succeeded in obtaining from the Turkish Government the sum of £ T. 204, in settlement of the claim arising out of the murder of Yusuf Yunan at Sairt.

Your Excellency's action in this matter is approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I have communicated your despatch to the Armenian Relief Committee, and expressed a strong hope that they will accept the sum obtained by your Excellency as a full settlement of the claim.

I have also requested that the matter may be treated as confidential.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 25.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 65.)
Constantinople, February 20, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah reporting the steps taken by the British Vice-Consul at that town to obtain from the Turkish authorities compensation for certain British Indian merchants residing in Mecca, Medina, and Jeddah for robberies committed in the Hedjaz between 1892 and 1898.

As your Lordship will see, the parties interested having expressed their willingness, on certain conditions, to accept half the amount at which they estimated their losses in full settlement of their claims, the Vali has consented to this arrangement, except in the case of two persons, into whose cases he proposes to make further inquiry.

I have already called the attention of the Sublime Porte to these cases of robbery, and I have now sent in a *note verbale*, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, informing them of the result of the negotiations between the British Vice-Consul and the delegates of the Vali.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 25.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 3.)

Jeddah, January 11, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a Report on the steps taken to obtain compensation for British Indian robberies.

Ahmed Ratib Pasha returns to-day to Mecca.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 25.

Vice-Consul Hussain to Consul Devey.

Jeddah, January 10, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, as suggested by his Excellency the Vali of the Hedjaz, and agreed to by you, the Vali appointed Aliyumni Effendi, his maktubji, Omar Nasif Effendi, the agent of the Grand Shereef, and Abdullah Banaja Effendi, a respectable merchant of this place, to discuss the claims of the British Indians for robberies committed on the Mecca and Medina roads from the 7th May, 1892, to the 22nd October, 1898, with myself and the Dragoman of this Consulate, with a view of coming to a conclusion for the payment of indemnity.

We met on the 17th December last for the first time, all the delegates being present. The maktubji informed us that the claims of—

1. Bennan, for a robbery committed on the Medina road in 1893, for 2,925 dollars;
2. Ishag Memon, for 121*l.*, robbed on the Mecca road in 1896;
3. Daood Abdullah, for the robbery of his personal property and jewellery to the value of 510*l.* on the Medina road in 1898; and
4. Ahmad Abdul Latif Memon, for a similar loss as the third one to the value of 305*l.*, were to be left out altogether from the discussion, as the authorities have objected from before to admit these four claims for want of sufficient proof. But I pointed out to the Turkish delegates that the authorities never asked the applicants for proofs at the time when robberies were committed; had authorities asked them they would have produced the required proofs, but to demand proofs now, after the lapse of years, is quite unreasonable; however, the British Indian merchants are still ready to prove their losses from their books in all those cases of robberies in which the robbed property was merchandize, but in those cases of robberies in which the robbed property was of the nature of personal articles, which are not entered in the books, it is impossible to produce proofs in detail after such a long time.

Also I pointed out that when the authorities did not ask for the proofs of any of the robberies when they were reported, and when there are no rules or regulations showing where and by whom the claims are to be examined and adjudged, how the claimants can be blamed for not proving their claims.

2. Daood Arab and Ahmed Abdullatif are very respectable merchants, and I cannot entertain the idea that their claims are groundless.

3. That they have stated in their applications that the robbery happened between Yambo and Medina, when the family of Daood Arab with his brother was going to the latter place where his father resides, and the property lost by Ahmed Abdullatif was also sent at the same time with Daood Arab's brother on the occasion of his [illegible]

4. Daood Arab and Ahmed Abdullatif are ready to prove that on account of their [illegible]

5. They [illegible] property [illegible] his servants were killed in the act of defending it.

And making [illegible] of the authorities of not instituting proper inquiries at the time, and in a half-hearted way the claims of Daood Arab and Ahmed Abdullatif were allowed to be included with other claims, and Ishag Memon and Bennan being not present at Jeddah, I agreed to leave their claims out for the present for further inquiry, as in the case of

Ishag Memon some of the robbed property was recovered and restored to the claimant, and in the case of Bennan, a Turkish subject, has applied to the Vali that the money robbed belonged to a Turkish subject, and Bennan has not proved up to this time that the money belonged to him.

We met again on the 24th ultimo, and the maktubji said that the claims were in most cases very exaggerated, and, therefore, the claimants should accept one-fourth of their original claims. I replied that unless it is proved that the claims are exaggerated I cannot admit it.

Then the maktubji said it had happened before that the British Indians have taken one-fourth in satisfaction of their total demands.

As I was certain this had never happened, I denied to admit the correctness of his statement.

As we could not come to any conclusion, I said that as the payment of the indemnity has been delayed too long and the claimants, besides being deprived of their money, have also been suffering the loss of interest, so if the money is to be paid without further delay, they might accept half in satisfaction of their total claims to avoid further delays.

And I also showed maktubji the receipt of the last payment of the indemnity when the claimants had accepted half of their original claims, and not one-fourth as alleged by him, and thereupon he admitted the incorrectness of the information which he said was given to Vali by some interested person.

Maktubji then told that he will communicate the result of our meeting to the Vali, and if necessary another meeting will be convened, and information will be given to us.

At the time of your visit on the 2nd instant as desired by the Vali, I invited the British Indian claimants for robberies, and informed them that the Vali was anxious to settle their claims and pay them without delay if they come to terms and agree to accept less than their claims.

After one day's deliberation they informed me that they will accept half in satisfaction of their full claims on the following conditions:—

1. That the money be paid at once through the Consulate.
2. That this instance should not be made a precedent in future.
3. That in future the claims for robberies should be examined and verified and the amount of indemnity fixed within a month, or any such reasonable time.
4. The claims for robberies should not be accumulated as heretofore, and be paid one by one separately.

I informed the Vali of the decision of the British Indians, but he was anxious to reduce the amount still further to which the claimants did not consent.

In conclusion, I beg to state that on the 9th instant when I called upon his Excellency the Vali he refused to admit the claims of Daood Arab and Ahmed Abdullatif, but said that he will inquire about these two claims, and for the rest he gave me to understand that shortly after his return to Mecca he will try to pay them off.

I have, &c.
(Signed) S. MOHAMMED HUSSAIN.

Inclosure 3 in No. 25.

Note Verbale.

HER Majesty's Embassy did not fail to forward to Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah the *note verbale* of the Sublime Porte No. 57, of the 24th November last on the subject of the robberies on British Indian subjects in the Hedjaz.

In answer, Her Majesty's Consul has now reported to Her Majesty's Embassy that the British Indian claimants for indemnities on this score have, after discussing their claims with the Vali's Delegate, declared their readiness to accept half in satisfaction of their full claims on the following conditions:—

1. That the money should be paid at once through Her Majesty's Consulate.
2. That this instance should not be made a precedent in future.
3. That in future the claims on account of robberies should be examined and verified at once, in order that the victims may be able to produce proofs in detail and the amount of indemnity fixed within a month or any such reasonable time.

That the claims should not be accumulated as heretofore, but be paid separately.

The inquiries into the claims of Daood Arab and Ahmed Abdullatif not being yet completed, Her Majesty's Embassy reserves to itself the right to present these cases at a future date. Under these circumstances and in view of the conciliatory disposition of the British Indians, who have abandoned one-half of their claims and waived any demand for interest, Her Majesty's Embassy requests that orders will be given to the Vali of the Hedjaz for the prompt payment of the money, and for the observance in future of the conditions set out above.

Constantinople, February 20, 1899.

No. 26.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—*(Received February 27.)*

(No. 67.)
Constantinople, February 21, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 10 of this day's date, I have the honour to inclose herewith the telegram I received from Captain Maunsell reporting that the inhabitants of Armenian villages some 25 miles north of Van are in a starving condition, that a sum of 2,000*l.* will be required to keep them alive, and that the relief money in hand is insufficient.

I informed the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I saw this afternoon, of the lamentable condition of those people, and I expressed the confident hope that the Imperial Government would afford assistance to tide the famine-stricken inhabitants over the next few months. His Excellency said that he would bring the matter before the proper authorities at once, with a view to relief being sent.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) P.
Van, February 19, 1899.

MY despatch No. 4 of the 16th January: Distress in Armenian villages.

Having visited the villages 25 miles north of Van, I can say that although relief has been given, one-third or one-half of the inhabitants are starving. Relief money has been used, but it is now insufficient to keep them alive, for which 2,000*l.* will be necessary.

No. 27.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—*(Received February 27.)*

(No. 68.)
Constantinople, February 21, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith two despatches from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum.

In his despatch No. 7 Colonel Massy states his views as to the political importance of the promotion of friendly relations between our Consular Officers and the civil and military authorities of his district.

Your Lordship will see from Colonel Massy's despatch, No. 8, that he has requested my authorization to proceed to Baibourt with relief for the destitute widows and orphans of that place.

I did not feel justified in giving Colonel Massy the authorization he desired, as Mr. Chambers, a well-known missionary of high character, was going to Baibourt and I felt sure that whatever charitable assistance was to be distributed could safely be left to him.

I entirely concur in Colonel Massy's view as to the desirability of promoting friendly relations with the local officials, but I am not assured as to the expediency of giving any encouragement to the Turkish officials to regard his proceedings in a political light. As I had the honour to inform your Lordship in my despatch No. 22 of the 19th ultimo, I have already conveyed to Major Massy a private warning to the above effect.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 27.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 7.)
Erzeroum, February 4, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that I am making use of every opportunity to increase the friendly relations which exist between me and the civil officials and military officers at this post. I find every desire on their part to meet me in this. It would appear from their conversation that Turkey desires our friendship as well as that of Germany. In many ways they have already testified to their desire to please me.

I hope that this satisfactory state of things may enable me to be of use here, in the spring, in influencing the policy to be adopted in keeping the Kurdish population within bounds, as well as in obtaining a satisfactory solution of any question which may have to be settled by us.

Moreover, I trust that I am right in thinking that in this display of friendship, I am carrying out our policy towards this Government, in its larger and more important aspect, so long as Turkey behaves with humanity and moderation towards her Christian subjects. Your Excellency, will, I hope, agree with me in thinking that Her Majesty's Consuls, scattered throughout this country, can do much towards establishing a good feeling between the two nations. It is, perhaps, their chief duty in these remote parts, where trade questions are few and where Russia is ever active to introduce her influence. I have therefore ventured to advise, privately, the vice-Consuls serving under me to adopt a similar line of conduct, and now that matters appear to have changed and that officials in this country again turn to us for friendly advice, to endeavour to gain an useful influence through a tactful line of conduct in their respective districts.

The proselytizing work which is being pursued amongst the Nestorians around Van and the Christians at Urmia would appear to be of considerable political significance. By converting these people to the orthodox faith it would appear to be Russia's aim to gain political influence and religious right of future interference in both these directions. To ward off immediate suspicion she may leave the conversions around Van and other parts of this country in abeyance at present, but she would appear to have paved the way for future operations in this direction. The great utility of these two spheres of religious influence, namely, Urmia and the country south of Van, at some future date is self-evident, giving Russia a future opportunity to step in to protect her co-religionists upon some occasion of her own making arising. It is, in fact, a set-off and a good one against the religious question at Jerusalem.

Both Urmia and Van are important points on the lines south to the Persian Gulf.

To thwart Russia in these designs is not an easy task, but here again I would beg to suggest the utility of active Consular officials who would travel amongst the Christians, to give them a feeling of self-reliance, while supporting our missionary establishments in counteracting Russian machinations. With such Christians the religious form counts but for little, a few pence and gilded promises from Russia are sufficient to bring them over wholesale if left to themselves.

It might, therefore, be worth the experiment to increase our Consular Staff here and there, and at least, to keep up such existing posts as Bitlis and Diarbekir for the present. The Russians are busy in those directions, also, the Russian Consul at Van having made a protracted tour throughout the whole of southern Kurdistan last summer.

In this general scramble for political souls it is interesting to record that the new Catholic Armenian Bishop at Van claims, in a letter just received from him by a leading

Catholic Armenian here, to have 20,000 Armenian Gregorians ready to join the Catholic Church. But this may be taken with caution as his funds will hardly admit of his paying even the low price for a conversion of half-a-crown a head at which Captain Maunsell tells me, in a private letter just received, a Nestorian priest has offered to provide him plenty of converts from his flock.

It is to be feared, however, that such converts would soon strike another bargain with another church, unless carefully looked after and kept in hand by foreign Ministers of their newly-adopted creed with a strong Consular backing.

Otherwise the temptation, from a financial point of view, becomes too strong.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

Inclosure 2 in No. 27.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 8.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, February* 5, 1899.

I HAVE this day telegraphed to your Excellency stating that a journey to Baibourt, two days' ride towards Trebizond, would appear to me to be very advisable. At that place there are nearly 1,000 orphans and several hundred widows, all in great destitution. We have a few hundred pounds relief money, but I hesitate to trust native agents with the duties of distribution.

The Reverend W. M. Chambers, of the American Mission at Erzeroum, who has done much already with regard to relief work, would accompany me, should your Excellency authorize this journey, occupying about one week, at a cost of some 15*l*

My other Consular duties would in no way suffer thereby.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 28.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 70.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 22, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Devey, Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, respecting the suppression of the title of "Seyyid" in the district of Mecca and Jeddah by the Grand Shereef of Mecca.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 28.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Jeddah, February* 1, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Grand Shereef of Mecca is said to have ordered the suppression of the title "Seyyid" in all the district comprising Mecca and Jeddah.

"Seyyid" is the designation which implies that the bearer is a descendant from Mahomet, all the world over there are many thousands (probably a quarter of a million at least) who claim such lineage, and the right of using this designation, which confers no special right nor distinction, but merely involves a claim upon other Moslems' regard. Many who claim this illustrious lineage do not habitually—or, indeed, ever—call themselves "Seyyid." I believe both the Kaïmakam of Jeddah and his Excellency the Vali are among the latter.

Perhaps the Grand Shereef thinks that the too-wide distribution of descent from the Prophet weakens his authority, or, rather, his particular distinction. One need not necessarily believe that his Highness has sometimes taken such violent measures as to inflict punishment stripes or imprisonment upon some ill-advised Seyyid who has avowed himself as such in the presence of the "Emaret," but the incident is remarkable because it is likely to arouse criticism throughout all Islam, and not only in this neighbourhood, where it will certainly call forth bitter opposition, though this may only be expressed secretly, and might, perhaps, be entirely suppressed by violent measures.

To those who are not interested in Moslem concerns it would certainly appear not merely futile, but injudicious, to resort to such an extreme proceeding, which amounts to persecution, and in a matter which certainly does not call for serious attention, and which is based on ancient custom.

As to the term "Seyyid," I may remark that in India it is generally applied to Shiah Mussulmans, although among the Sunnis it keeps its original restricted meaning. In Persia it is much in vogue. In Egypt it is very generally misapplied to any one who can read and write. In Turkey it is rarely met with, whilst in Arabia it is common, and ranks little below the dignity attaching to "Shereef," which designation is very common in the neighbourhood of Mecca. Javanese and Malays are given to adopting the addition of "Seyyid" to their names.

I regret I have not been able to procure a copy of the Shereef's Proclamation, but hope to be able to no so, and to forward by next post.

I should also report that the Shereef has recently been issuing other regulations and sumptuary laws, which are well received by the public, and appear to be suited to the needs of the district. Some of these are in encouragement of marriage, limiting the amount of dowry or of settlement to be paid by the man contracting matrimony (for which Turkish law affords a precedent), or restricting wasteful and excessive expenditure at weddings, and, in general, all are intended to inaugurate a reign of higher morality.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 29.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 71.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 22, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Lieut.-Colonel Massy, Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, for transmission to the War Office, reporting a conversation with Ferik Mehmet Ali Pasha, commanding the 7th Division.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Lieut.-Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, January* 21, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, in a conversation which I held with the Ferik Mehemet Ali Pasha, commanding the 7th Division, head-quarters Erzeroum, a few day's ago, I gleaned the following information, which may be of interest to the Director of Military Intelligence either as new or as confirmatory of previous reports:—

It is proposed to raise a force of Kurdish infantry in the Dersim district, the conditions of enlistment in which would be similar to those governing the present Hamidieh cavalry. Mehmet Ali Pasha is of opinion that this project has already been sanctioned from Constantinople to be begun in the spring. Some twenty or thirty battalions would be raised. These auxiliaries would be organized as a special mountain infantry force, trained for guerilla warfare, good shots, who would dispute the passage of the difficult mountain tracks of this intricate country.

This project, should it be carried out, will, doubtless, have disadvantages as well as advantages. It may be that these people, when lawfully permitted to carry arms, may do much harm in time of peace, while, in the event of war, it is hardly to the Dersim fastnesses that the Russians would at first betake themselves, while, once surrounded and cut off, these Kurds would probably throw in their lot with the victorious Russians.

On the other hand, Mehmet Ali Pasha says that, as a guarantee of their good behaviour, and as a civilizing agency, the sons of the Dersim Chiefs will be sent to school at Government Colleges at Constantinople. This is being done already in the case of the Hamidieh, several youths having already started for the capital, and more will follow.

This may produce good results in the case of the Dersim district, which is now so wild and unsubdued that no Government officials can penetrate into it unguarded. I shall inform your Excellency as soon as these projects take more definite shape.

Mehmet Ali Pasha told me that the Hamidieh are being gradually trained, a certain proportion of each regiment being attached to the regular cavalry every year. Next spring their training is to be more carefully attended to, during which exercises he has invited me to accompany him to see their progress. Their instruction is to be very elementary: simple movements, with special attention to reconnaissance duties and good shooting. He is hopeful that, by degrees, their behaviour will improve. As I am on very friendly terms with the General, his staff, and with the senior officers of this garrison, I hope I may be able to influence their action in suppressing acts of pillage and robbery by the Kurds next spring, which have been a scourge to the Christian rural population during past years.

During our recent conversation, we again spoke at some length on the subject of the defences of this frontier. He is fully alive as to the necessity of guarding the roads running north and south of Erzeroum in a westerly and south-westerly direction. His hope is that England and her friends will guard the Black Sea Anatolian coast, which would oblige the Russians to move their artillery by roads across the frontier, an operation attended with great difficulty, except by limited lines of advance. These limitations would render it possible to concentrate a comparatively large force south of Erzeroum, towards Van and Bitlis, to check incursions into Mesopotamia, and to meet an enemy with some hope of success. If the command of the Black Sea were to remain in the hands of the Russians, however, the struggle would not be evenly matched. In any case, much depends on the state of Turkish preparedness, especially that of the 4th Army Corps and of the frontier defences, to meet the first advance. At present, much is left to be desired with respect to these matters. Such were Mehmet Ali Pasha's ideas, expressed to me with a frankness and an absence of Turkish optimism which showed me at once both his genuine desire for our friendship and his thorough appreciation of the difficulties which would present themselves in the event of an onslaught by their northern enemy.

I expressed the hope that the necessary dispositions might be made while there was yet time. I have no hope, however, that matters will improve. Money is scarce, and not sufficient to fill the pockets of those whose hands it passes through, as well as to supply the many actual wants—heavy guns, ammunition, cavalry and other horses, transport, defensive works to bar the principal roads and passes, clothing and equipment for the men, &c.—in fact, those things which distinguish an organized army from a semi-armed rabble. In the event of war, also, I fear that the enemy would be far into this country before any mobilization were possible.

As an instance of defective distribution of the troops of this frontier army corps, I would like to call attention to the location of the troops of the 7th Division, which has its head-quarters at Erzeroum, with its 13th Brigade, head-quarters at Erzeroum, posts distributed along the Russian frontier, from Bayazid to Rizeh, while the 14th Brigade, 7th Division, has its head-quarters at Sivas, due west of Erzinghian, the Army Corps head-quarters, with posts strung out from Kerasund to Trebizond; so that the 7th Division is called upon to guard a front of some 709 miles, from Bayazid to Kerasund. With the

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No. 29*.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 27.)

(No. 76.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, February* 23, 1899.

AS instructed in your Lordship's despatch No. 26 of the 1st instant, I took the occasion of a visit the Armenian Patriarch paid to me on the 17th instant to speak to him in regard to the reported interference of an Armenian ecclesiastic at Zeitoun with a view to the closing of an orphanage there. I told His Beatitude that this action, whether confined to Zeitoun or not, had been seized upon by the Turks to close other orphanages and to state that they had done so at the instance of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities.

His Beatitude expressed his regret for the precipitate action of the Armenian ecclesiastic at Zeitoun, but denied any knowledge of similar steps having been taken elsewhere. He fully recognized the debt of gratitude due to those charitable British Societies who had contributed so generously, and all he wanted was that this act of generosity should not be weakened by any attack upon the religion of his compatriots, which was nearly all that now remains to them.

His Beatitude added that he would inquire into the matter, and begged leave to send me a Memorandum on the subject.

I have since received the inclosed note from the Patriarch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 29*.

The Armenian Patriach at Constantinople to Sir N. O'Conor.

Constantinople, le 6 (18) *Février*, 1899.

LE Patriarcat Arménien s'empresse de porter à la connaissance de l'Ambassade d'Angleterre, à propos des bruits qui courent sur les orphelinats étrangers dans les provinces de la Turquie;

Qu'aucune démarche n'est faite de la part du Patriarcat près la Sublime Porte, ni contre l'existence, ni contre un acte quelconque regardant les dits orphelinats;

Que le Patriarcat a suivi de tout temps avec un sentiment de pleine gratitude les soins et les sacrifices que les âmes pieuses de l'Europe et de l'Amérique ont montré envers les pauvres éprouvés, les veuves et les orphelins Arméniens;

Que le Patriarcat a muni spontanément des lettres d'introduction et de recommandation les personnes chargées de l'inspection des orphelinats étrangers;

Que le Patriarcat en se basant sur les intentions philanthropiques de ces bienfaiteurs est resté et reste convaincu que les secours de bienfaisance ne doivent servir ni pour le prosélytisme ni contre l'Église Nationale Arménienne:

Que le Patriarcat a demandé seulement et il demande toujours que les orphelins dont il est le tuteur et qui se trouvent dans les orphelinats étrangers doivent être élevés et instruits dans la religion de leur père et ne pas être privés de l'exercice du culte de leur religion, et il a donné aux chefs des diocèses des instructions dans ce sens,

Que même la réunion des missionnaires à Constantinople en 1897 a déclaré admettre ces principes;

Que malgré cette déclaration quelques missionnaires inspirés plutôt du zèle de prosélytisme que des sains principes de l'humanité ont continué à refuser aux orphelins Arméniens l'instruction et les exercices de leur religion et à blesser les sentiments nationaux et religieux des Arméniens;

Que dans des circonstances pareilles le Patriarcat n'a jamais agi ni ordonné agir que dans les cercles des relations directes et particulières, et il n'a jamais porté l'affaire devant les autorités politiques:

Que la plainte portée par le Vicaire Diocésain de Zeitoun contre la conduite du missionnaire de Marache a été un cas isolé motivé par la déclaration écrite du dit missionnaire, de vouloir élever les orphelins Arméniens dans le culte Protestant, pour la seule raison des soins élargis en leur faveur;

Que ce cas isolé bien que pleinement justifié, n'est pas encore passé en état d'exécution et cela en conformité des instructions du Patriarcat et dans l'attente d'une résolution plus raisonnable de la part de la Direction de l'orphelinat Américain de Zeitoun ;

Que le Patriarcat est heureux de donner acte de la conduite éclairée et humanitaire des chefs de quelques orphelinats étrangers, qui ont donné pleinement raison à ses désirs en permettant à leurs orphelins Arméniens l'instruction religieuse et les exercices du culte et les pratiques ecclésiastiques de leur religion.

Le Patriarcat [illegible] que ces déclarations suffisent pour dissiper l'impression causée par le [illegible] et pour prouver la sincérité [illegible] conduite, et [illegible] action [illegible] pour que [illegible] de vue, ces faits [illegible] aspirations du Patriarcat et [illegible] intentions [illegible] toute [illegible] condition de accepter [illegible] imposée pas aux Arméniens [illegible] leurs [illegible] nationaux contre les bénéfices et les secours reçus.

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defective communications of this country, how can a General effectively command a force so distributed? To inspect his 14th Brigade head-quarters would take him a month's hard travelling to reach Sivas and back at this season. To visit his advanced posts would require some three months at this season. It would be more logical were the 14th Brigade head-quarters to be located at Trebizond, the defence of the coast thence to Kerasund being confided to some other unit.

As I find that the senior military officers converse with me freely on military matters, I shall take an opportunity, when better acquainted with them, of criticizing the present dispositions in a friendly spirit.

The General Commanding is quite alive to present imperfections with regard to many things, and appears to be grateful for opinions expressed in a friendly way.

I have to observe care and tact not to arouse any unfriendly feeling on the part of the officials of the Russian Consulate-General. The staff is a large one, including a Colonel who, while sinking his rank (although it is well known to everybody), performs the duties of Military Attaché. He disposes of considerable sums, both to obtain information as well as to bring certain people under Russian influence. I am glad to be able to assure your Excellency that I am on the best of terms with this officer, as well as with the Russian Consul-General, who is my only Consular colleague in Erzeroum, except the Persian Consul-General, since the departure on leave of the French Consul a few weeks ago, he being replaced now by his Armenian Dragoman.

The position and duties of an English Consul are rendered more difficult owing to other Powers being represented in Kurdistan by Consuls-General, but the lesser rank in no way influences my action, and, owing to the excellent relations which I have been able to establish with both the civil and military officials of this province, I have no doubt that I shall be in a position to make my presence be felt for good on occasion arising.

In conclusion, I am glad to be in a position to report to your Excellency that the feud which has existed between the Governor-General and the General Commanding for the past eighteen months or more, and so often alluded to by Mr. Graves in writing upon the political state of this Consular district, and which was becoming disastrous in its results, has, at length, been brought to an end. These officials are again on friendly terms. This is a cause of congratulation, as both are useful and good men, and the departure of either would have been most regrettable.

As the reconciliation coincides exactly with Suleiman Pasha's arrival at the 4th Army Corps head-quarters, after the conversation which I had with him, as reported in my despatch No. 1 of the 5th instant to your Excellency, I am the more pleased, as I cannot help taking some credit for this happier state of affairs. I have been told, moreover, that the General received a hint from Erzinghian to meet Raouf Pasha halfway in this matter. Everyone here is the more surprised, as, only a few week's ago, several of the best-informed residents told me that Mehmet Ali Pasha was implacable, while Raouf Pasha was of a most obstinate nature, so that there was no hope of the breach being mended.

Mr. Graves' parting words to me were these: "If you succeed in bringing about a reconciliation you will have made your presence be felt for great good while accomplishing a thing which has baffled a good many people until now." The difficulty lay in the fact that so many agencies were at work to widen the breach instead of bridging it over—persons ever ready to carry tales of things supposed to be said of these two officials disparaging each other. The Russian Consular officials, also, lost no opportunity to keep the wound from healing.

The chief credit is due to Suleiman Pasha, nephew to Zekki Pasha, a long-headed fellow, who, to a great personal regard for Raouf Pasha, unites a love for this country and England and a bitter hatred towards Russia. He understood, therefore, the meaning of the motto "l'Union fait la Force."

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,

Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 30.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 3.)

(No. 1.)
My Lord,

Tabreez, February 16, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, on the subject of the proceedings of the latest Russian religious Mission to the Nestorians in the south-western districts of this province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 30.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 1.)
Sir,

Tabreez, February 16, 1899.

PRIVATE reports from Urumiah show that the new Russian Mission to the Nestorians, in carrying out its ideas or work among these people, has been lately giving some cause of complaint to the various foreign Missions so long established in the south-west districts of Azerbaijaan, owing to its way of interfering and dealing with their several followings; and I think I cannot do better than give your Excellency a general view of what is taking place in those parts.

For some time after the arrival here of the present Russian Mission the absorption of Nestorians into the Orthodox fold was carried on somewhat prudently and peaceably, owing, perhaps, to later instructions given to it after the experience of the manner of the rush made for the Nestorians by the previous Mission, and the consequent state of anxiety, if not general religious alarm, raised by its actions. But, from what I am able to gather, the Russian Mission now takes advantage of the powers behind it, not only to oblige Nestorians, who have once given in their adherence to its teachings, to remain steadfast, but to intervene frequently in interests and matters even to the distress and at the cost of the personal liberty of the people.

During my stay in Urumiah an occasion occurred, on which, at my suggestion, the present Chief of the Russian Mission, the Monk Papilaks, being questioned as to the attitude he would adopt in the event of any ex-follower of the Presbyterians, who had formally accepted the Græco-Russian tenets, relapsing, or desiring to return to his former belief, frankly stated at the time that no objection would be offered to their doing so, saying, "As they came voluntarily, [illegible]

Now the opposite view is held, and, apparently, very rigorously maintained, whilst, at the [illegible] unfortunately, a [illegible] of adherence is no longer required by the Russian missionaries from later [illegible] converts; and names inscribed in its Registers by any one Nestorian, of friends or relatives, often, of course, against the will or desire of the people themselves, are [illegible]

As these are considered to be as tightly bound to the new creed as if they had personally signed, a great deal of ill-feeling [illegible] about, and general discontent, as well as confusion, arises.

In some cases, the Russian priests a[illegible] actually paraded the streets in certain villages, armed with thick sticks challenging [illegible] of their converts to the [illegible] them, or calling upon the champions of the Anglican [illegible] Presbyterian persuasion to come forward and try conclusions in favour of their [illegible], religious views, or general mastery.

We have had much of a disquieting nature to complain of in the districts of Urumiah and Salmas occurring between the local authorities and the Christian subjects of the Shah, but now that a breathing space has been obtained by the recall of effete or sanguinary officials, who raised trouble enough [illegible] authorities and disturbances, likely, eventually, to put the Mussulmans and their Christian countrymen at loggerheads, are [illegible] charity.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Nestorians seems alone to have escaped coming into collision with the Russians.

This is readily explained by the fact that they make no attempt to proselytize, and carry on, unostentatiously, their duty, which is simply to strengthen and confirm the old Syrians in the learning and teachings of their ancient faith, but the Presbyterians and Roman Catholic Missions are annoyed and hurt by the actions of their Russian colleagues in religious matters. It is, of course, painful to them, personally, as well as to their national and religious feelings, to be spectators of desertions from their different folds, and see illegitimate pressure placed upon their late disciples to hold them to their new religious allegiance, when these show the slightest sign of repenting them of their present state, or of a disposition to return to their former beliefs.

As I have already stated in my previous despatches on the progress of the Russian Mission in these parts,* the chief attraction for the Nestorians lay in the promises made by the Russians of the protection which would be extended by the Czar's Government to all who should enter the Orthodox Communion.

On the return to Russia of the first Mission,† great numbers of those who had accepted its teachings fell back into their late beliefs, and, but a few of these rejoined the fresh Mission on its appearance, although numbers of new converts did so. Such sinning, repentings, and backslidings, on the part of the Nestorians, were evidently much felt by the new Mission; now, therefore, stricter measures are being taken to prevent relapses, and aid, even, according to the information which reaches me, is sought from the local authorities to support and strengthen its hold upon lukewarm, uncertain, or recalcitrant members, through fines, menaces, or even deprivation of their personal freedom for short intervals.

Such proceedings would appear, at first sight, beyond credence; but when it is considered that strong Firmans have been obtained from the Central Government through Russian diplomacy, and these Charters are said to have been augmented and extended through the efforts of the Russian Consulate-General in Tabreez, to whom our present Governor-General cannot refuse anything, by which the Russian Mission is granted all power in regard to their religious attributions and actions, even in respect to their adherents, it will no longer be a matter of surprise to find the authorities in Urumiah doing their best to follow instructions and to content them at any cost of right or equity, or of their own dignity.

The Russian border is close to us, and, in Azerbaijaan, at least, the ways of Russian diplomacy are somewhat brutal. The word "kasak" is generally heard when matters come to a certain pass between the authorities and their neighbours, and has a wonderfully softening effect upon the former, especially as the native officials and functionaries are fully awake to the fact that they have lost the respect, and even the fear, of the population, which would be only too glad to welcome any change of system and Government on the slightest assurances of its religious belief, institutions, and teachings being respected.

The attitude of the Russian Mission towards the other official representatives, if I may so put it, of Christianity is much to be deplored, as it cannot fail to add to the spirit of intrigue and mutual bickerings, so ingrained in the populations of this country, and certainly tends to lower all respect for Christians in the minds of the Mussulman population, and may eventually lead to general confusion and disturbances.

To my lay mind, the anxiety displayed by the various foreign religious Missions their endeavours to attract the native Christian populations to their several ways of religious thought is a matter of continual wonder, inasmuch as, during the years in which the various Missions have been established in this part of Persia, and have used much energy and enormous sums in their labours and efforts among the Nestorian population, they can hardly have failed to perceive the utter unreliableness, and even general perversity, of the material upon which they work. If they have not done so (and this seems to me to be hard to believe), the way in which they have been abandoned by their best followers on the slender promises made to them of material benefit by the Russians must have opened their eyes. The Russian Mission has evidently come to stay. Its progress and the manner in which it is now said to be carrying on its duties shows that it intends, in time, to supplant most, if not all, other religious influences in North-Western Persia.

How far our Anglican missionaries can carry on their work beside the new influence, or combine with it. I cannot say, for, as I have already stated,* I am not sufficiently versed in matters ecclesiastical to judge; but I am obliged to share the general opinion that all the foreign missionaries will, in time, have to bow to the inevitable, either owing to the sole efforts of their Russian confrères or to political exigencies, and accept the inscription "Ite, finis est," to their long, devoted, but ungratefully-rewarded labours.

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* See Consul-General Wood's No. 2 of June 21, and No. 3 of July 1, 1897.—C. G. W.

† See Consul-General Wood's No. 3 of October 18, 1898.—C. G. W.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 31.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 80.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, February 23, 1899.

THE Gregorian Patriarch, Monseigneur Ormanian, called upon me on the 17th instant.

His Beatitude explained [illegible] that the object of his visit was to find out whether I [illegible] Petition to Her Majesty's Government [illegible] the other Powers [illegible] the condition of the Armenians [illegible] reforms repeatedly promised by the Sultan and the Imperial Government.

His Beatitude [illegible] they actually [illegible] about the whole of Armenia [illegible] vexatious and harassing restrictions by which Armenians were forbidden to travel from one district to another even for purposes of trade, to their exclusion from all Government employment, and [illegible] to which they were subjected in the levying of taxes which they had no means of paying, inasmuch as they had been despoiled of everything [illegible].

[illegible] these circumstances he [illegible] whether it was not advisable to keep the Armenian question before the Powers rather than risk the chance of their condition being forgotten, while that of other Christians throughout the Empire was engaging the attention of Europe.

Before, however, taking any step in the matter, he was anxious privately to have my advice, and for this reason, and knowing the interest which England had not ceased to take in his country, he ventured to address himself to Her Majesty's Embassy in the first instance.

I told his Beatitude that I could not undertake to give him any advice officially on the subject. At the same time, if he wished to know whether I considered an appeal to the Powers would be successful in the sense of fresh representations being made at this moment to the Sultan in respect to the execution of the reforms in Armenia, I must frankly tell him that I did not think so. Other questions of importance had arisen and were pressing upon the attention of the Powers, and I did not believe an appeal such as his Beatitude had suggested would lead to any beneficial or practical result.

Efforts were, I said, being made, and would continue to be made, by Her Majesty's Government to alleviate the sufferings of the Armenians and to procure redress of special grievances which were brought to their notice by Her Majesty's Consular Agents in the provinces, but beyond this I said I did not see what action could be taken at the present moment.

After I had given my opinion in the above sense, it seemed to me that his Beatitude was somewhat relieved in mind, as he immediately proceeded to say that on the whole there was a sensible improvement in the situation, no doubt it was not very great, but still it was apparent, and it encouraged the hope of further improvement in the future.

Before leaving the Embassy, his Beatitude called on Mr. Block, and, after much beating about the bush, admitted that he had been assured by Artin Pasha, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that Her Majesty's Government would again take up the Armenian reforms question if he moved in the matter. Acting on this advice he had drawn up a Petition which he had with him, but upon hearing what I had said, he had not thought advisable to present it.

It is difficult to explain the motives that prompted Artin Pasha to give this advice, but probably it was connected with some Palace intrigue. Anyhow the Patriarch seemed only too glad to have an excuse to escape from a position which would have compromised him with the Sultan, with whom he is generally supposed to be anxious to keep on friendly terms.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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[*] See Consul-General Wood's No. 3 of October 18, 1898 (Part I).—C. G. W.

No. 32.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 86.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, February 27, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, forwarding a despatch from the British Consular Agent at Samsoun reporting the intrusion of three Armenians into the principal mosque in that town while service was being held.

Any serious consequences which might have resulted from this rash act were averted by the good sense of certain Government employés and police agents, who screened the men from the public view until the congregation had dispersed.

Your Lordship will see, from the last paragraph of the Consular Agent's despatch, that the Governor of the Sandjak of Samsoun is of opinion, and Mr. Cortanza thinks not without ground, that the three Armenians were acting under the orders of the Secret Revolutionary Committee, whose criminal action, should it be so, cannot be too strongly reprobated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 32.

Consul Longworth to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 5.)
Sir,
Trebizond, February 14, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith copy of a despatch from the British Consular Agent at Samsoun reporting the rather imprudent, if not suspicious, intrusion of three Armenians into a mosque there during the evening hour of Ramazan worship.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 32.

Mr. Cortanze to Consul Longworth.

M. le Consul,
Samsoun, le 10 Février, 1899.

J'AI l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance que Dimanche, le 5 courant, dans la soirée, il s'est produit un fait fort grave, dont les conséquences auraient pu être des plus tragiques.

Trois Arméniens, les nommés: Mampré, âgé de 18 ans; Kevork, âgé de 22 ans et Ohannès, âgé de 24 ans, tous les trois natifs de Tcharshamba, se sont rendus à la principale mosquée de notre ville, pendant la prière. Il y avait en ce moment à la mosquée environ 1,100 personnes. Vu l'affluence considérable des fidèles, ils n'ont pu, heureusement, aller au cœur de la mosquée. Ils étaient près de la porte [illegible] du côté gauche de la salle.

Un employé du konak remarqua que ces trois personnes, au lieu de faire les prières et génuflexions d'usage, se tenaient debout sans mot dire; étonné, il les examina et reconnut l'un d'entre eux. Aussitôt se rendant [illegible] ces trois jeunes gens couraient et des conséquences que cela pouvait avoir, il fit signe à un de ses collègues de bureau, le mit au courant, appelant à un zaptié et un agent de police, qui se trouvaient tout près, et ces quatre hommes intelligents entourèrent ces trois jeunes gens, de façon à les masquer à la vue des autres fidèles. Aussitôt la cérémonie terminée, ils les firent sortir, les accompagnèrent quelques pas, jusqu'à une petite ruelle voisinante, les retinrent quelques minutes pour donner le temps aux Musulmans de se disperser et ensuite les abandonnèrent.

Le Mutessarif fut informé du fait dans la nuit; il donna immédiatement l'ordre de les arrêter, ce qui fut fait Lundi après-midi. A 10 heures du soir le Mutessarif voulut interroger ces jeunes gens. Il les fit venir dans son cabinet, et, devant deux notables Arméniens de notre ville, procéda à l'interrogatoire. Les trois jeunes gens répondirent exactement la même chose, et ni menaces ni prières ne purent faire varier leurs déclarations. Ils affirmèrent n'être entrés à la mosquée que par curiosité dans l'unique but de se rendre compte de la cérémonie. Le Mutessarif leur demanda [illegible] il désiraient se faire Musulmans; ils répondirent que non, qu'ils étaient [illegible] leur foi et à leur nation. Sur cette dernière réponse, ils furent reconduits [illegible] encore, en attendant qu'on statue sur leur cas.

[illegible] le fait Mardi matin, malgré toutes les précautions qu'avaient prises le [illegible]

[illegible] me rendis au konak passer la soirée avec notre Gouverneur, avec lequel [illegible] relations fort amicales. Notre Mutessarif m'a mis au courant de toute [illegible] histoire, me priant de ne pas en parler en ville, craignant encore que l'affaire en [illegible]

[illegible] hasard providentiel que ces quatre fonctionnaires aient pu sauver ces trois jeunes gens, [illegible]

[illegible] ça n'aurait pas été tout, m'assurait le Gouverneur, et ces premiers délits [illegible] était convaincu que tout ce peuple, enivré par ce premier sang, se serait répandu dans la ville et aurait commis toutes les barbaries que l'autorité n'aurait [illegible] nir. Le Mutessarif est convaincu que pour le moins un de ces jeunes [illegible] le troisième aurait parfaitement compris l'importance de l'acte qu'ils com[illegible] suppose, donc, avec apparence de [illegible] fonctionnaire qu'il a agi.

[illegible] des conséquences, car s'il en est réellement comme le présume notre [illegible] prouve le réveil des Comités Arméniens, et, dans ce cas, il y aurait [illegible] des événements plus graves [illegible] qui pouvait se produire à cet égard

Veuillez, &c.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]—(*Received March* 6.)

[illegible]

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul [illegible] respecting the general condition of his district during the past year.

Mr. Longworth reports that the state of public security has been satisfactory, and that the economic condition of the province is deplorable owing to the fiscal [illegible]

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Consul Longworth to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 6.)

Trebizond, February 15, 1899.

Sir,

THE political situation having assumed of late a more normal aspect, I would venture to resume here the discontinued series of Annual Reports furnished for the years 1890–94.

My observations shall, as in the past, be based on a diary of events kept at this Consulate and on other reliable sources of information, both official and private. With a view of combining conciseness with clearness, facts already reported when alluded to will be numbered, and the despatches containing the information will be indexed for the convenience of reference.

In reviewing the actual status of the vilayet, the three unsettled years of 1895–97 may well be left a blank. From the beginning of 1890 to the autumn of 1895, improvements were perceptible in almost all branches of the Administration (1). It was a progress marked and steady, which tended to inspire not only confidence at the time, but hope for the future, and which, had it been maintained, would by now have raised the country to a state of exceptional prosperity.

[illegible] however, of October 1895 (2), followed by events of equal gravity in other parts of Asiatic Turkey, discredited the Government and impoverished the people. Thus, whatever ameliorations had taken place, were brought [illegible] abrupt end, and consequently a fresh start had to be made under circumstances comparatively adverse.

The first symptoms of recovery became visible almost immediately after the introduction of the reform scheme. Advancing step by step in the path of pro[illegible] the province attained in 1898 a state of unsurpassed tranquillity and order. It was a [illegible] Moslems, or to alarm the Christians. Its affairs, moreover, embarrassed though they were by the dearth of money, took a smooth and even course; while some activity in commercial and industrial pursuits helped to relieve the people from that acute indigence into which they had been plunged by the Armenian troubles and the Greco-Turkish war.

Viewed from a general standpoint, the country has come out of the late crisis less [illegible] as much as the Christians. I was going to say more! Witness their fearful loss of life from sickness in Thessaly (3), their unceremonious expulsion from Crete, and their poverty-stricken homes around. Compare these disheartening issues of a victorious campaign with the generous contributions in relief of the Armenians, amount[illegible] secuted, and the late very effective protection extended to the Greeks by the British, French, and Russian Governments (5). [illegible] obviously [illegible] Turks. Will they take the lesson to heart is the question? It may almost be answered in the affirmative, for many of them are beginning to regard their misfortunes as the punishment of Providence for the innocent blood they had spilt.

The area of the vilayet is given herewith annexed in Table I. It has recently been enlarged by the transfer of the Kerik Canton to the Kerassond district. The tract is mountainous and arid, and its acquisition, therefore, is of small value to this densely-peopled province, whose consumption [illegible] exceeds production [illegible] 7,000,000 bushels. [illegible] at a cost of some 900,000*l.* a-year.

Table II gives the population as estimated by the authorities. It [illegible] mainly of four ethical groups: the Laz, the Georgian, the Greek, and the Armenian, [illegible] of Kurds and Tartars, Persians [illegible] Linguistically apart, the dialects of these leading races are much debased by a free admixture of words and idioms, defects which, were it not for the schools, would in time, more or less remote, have simply conglomerated into a distinct local jargon. The inhabitants are, on the whole, a healthy, active, and quick-witted people. They possess, moreover, all the acquisitiveness of the Semitic race, which in itself is enough to explain the fact of there being no Hebrews in this portion of the Empire. In manners and customs they are fast adopting the European code of life, together with the costumes of the West, made up mostly of cheap and shoddy materials. Homespun cloths and native-made wares are consequently from year to year in less demand. Foreign goods of inferior quality, prison-made or not, are rapidly superseding them, so much so that local artificers and artisans, weavers, tanners, joiners, founders, and others, can with difficulty now gain a competency.

Some details of the schools are furnished in Table III. An impetus has of late years been given to higher education, which is not the one likely to prove of great public benefit. The sooner it becomes, therefore, more technical and less literary the better. The country is in fact beginning to have, as in Greece, too many pedagogues and demagogues. What she requires are useful members of the community; men who are practical, intelligent, and unpretentious, and who, with only the rudiments of learning, would till the soil and develop her industries. The increased number of schools for Moslem girls are noticeable. It is to be hoped that their young minds are being instilled with such tolerant and enlightened ideas as would enable them in womanhood to give their children the soundest of material advice.

The moral and material welfare of the people in Turkey is very much dependent on the choice of Government officials. The Vali, Cadri Bey, is happily the right man in the right place. Clear-headed and kind-hearted, just and firm, he continues to be greatly liked and feared. During his now more than six years tenure of office, there has been but one blot, a big blot, on his record. It is his having been unable, or unwilling, to prevent the massacre. Not so his subordinate Hamdi Bey at Samsoun an equally efficient Governor, who, in those troubled times, threatened to shoot with [illegible] own hand any one disturbing the peace, were he even hanged for it.

A few particulars of the more important functionaries are given in Table IV. Those in minor positions may be described as needlessly numerous and poorly paid, who, when once habituated to routine work, do fairly well if no temptations lie in their way. They are almost exclusively Turks, and indolence is their besetting characteristic Some of them however, those without patronage, are not altogether deficient in qualities which make good subordinates, and would doubtless be nearer the mark of perfection were they all placed under the control and guidance of active, honest, and resolute men. The Christian officials, on the other hand, are more diligent, if not more scrupulous. It is instructive to observe how they are becoming daily less cringing towards the Mussulmans, if not less bumptious towards their coreligionists. They may be thus unconsciously preparing the way for men of a superior type, who, on terms of equality with the Turks, would gladly enough perhaps enter the service of the State in all its branches. The present adjuvants of the Governors have not as yet distinguished themselves, nor have they gained hitherto much esteem. It is partly their own fault that they are set at nought. What else, for instance, could the one expect who was caught by me hobnobbing with the lackeys of an Imperial Commissioner? None of these, moreover, seem to possess intellectual powers of a very high order. If they do, they must indeed be men of great public spirit to hide them so thoroughly as to raise no jealousy prejudicial to a good and orderly Government.

Fiscal matters embarrassed the authorities as much in 1898 as they did in 1897 (6). The principal items of the Budget are given in Table V. The totals represent in round figures £ T. 335,000 as income, against £ T. 184,000 as expenditure. By adding to the above nothing more than those of the Custom-houses, £ T. 90,000 against £ T. 12,000 and the Public Debt Offices £ T. 106,000 against £ T. 21,000, we arrive at the conclusion that no less than £ T. 314,000, out of £ T. 531,000 paid by the people, leave the vilayet annually. The economic condition of the province is deplorable so long as the principle of enriching the State by enriching the people is ignored in practice, if not in theory. Under existing circumstances, a great number of villagers are unable to meet their taxes. Arrears, it is true, have been and are being collected, but with often undue severity, and, as in the Ordou sub-district, with even cruelty. There would certainly be fewer abuses were Shakir Pasha's scheme (7) of converting the tithes into fixed taxes, to be adopted as far as practicable. Moreover, as a stinted Administration cannot but breed corruption, the authorities should be pestered as little as possible by the Palace for money. Of all the evils attending the centralization of power at Yildiz, this incessant demand for remittances is perhaps the worst. It simply leaves the officials, the gendarmes, and the soldiers without their pay. That under the circumstances, bribery, peculation, and extortion are not in more prominent evidence is to me an astonishment.

The state of public security was extremely satisfactory. In all the districts, though less in that of Ordou, safety to life and property existed fully and to an extent quite unprecedented. What was reported in 1897 (8) holds good for 1898, with one additional fact, namely, if there were any acts of robbery, burglary, &c., there were no cases of murder within, at least, the Trebizond Sandjak. For the peace and order so well maintained, no little praise is due to the 63 policemen (4 Greeks and 3 Armenians) and the 1,200 gendarmes (45 Christians) of the vilayet. The more active and vigilant among them were duly rewarded, twenty by promotion and four by good-conduct medals.

The prisoners in this town at the close of the year numbered 244 Moslems and 18 Christians. The convictions during the twelve months, which were mostly for old offences, numbered 15 to one year, 69 from one to five years, 5 from five to ten years, and 36 from ten to fifteen years' imprisonment.

The administration of justice was not altogether without blemish, except, perhaps, in grave criminal cases. It would, doubtless, display fewer defects were it placed under the control of the Governor-General. The Commercial Court showed partiality, in even the suits of British subjects. An endeavour was made in one case (9) to annul its own decision, and in another (10) to execute a judgment while in appeal at Constantinople, procedures which necessitated this Consulate to seek and find remedies, unusual but effective. As for the Civil Court, it latterly struck work for a whole month! It was a scandal! The Cadi Ihsan Effendi, a Palace spy, used gross and insulting language to its members, and they taking offence resigned to a man. Nothing short of his removal from Trebizond would satisfy them, and therefore he was at last not dismissed but transferred to Kastamouni.

Apologizing, in conclusion, for the length of this Report, I would add that, politically, the province was quiet to a degree unknown for years. The Armenians were left unmolested, the Young Turkey party showed no signs of existence, and the Mahommedans subdued, apparently by vague fears, displayed towards the Christians a much more tolerant and conciliatory spirit.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

REFERENCE to previous Reports.

No.	Date	Subject
1	January 15, 189[illegible] February [illegible] 189[illegible] January 10, 189[illegible] „ 31, 189[illegible] „ 25, 189[illegible]	Annual reports on the condition of the vilayet
2	February 8, 189[illegible]	The Armenian troubles.
3	July 2, 189[illegible]	Return of the troops from Thessaly
4	January 9, 189[illegible]	Armenian relief work.
5	May 1, 1898	Protection extended to Greeks.
6	October 7, 1897	Economic status of the vilayet.
7	December 11, „	Shakir Pasha's tithe scheme.
8	June 10 October 23	State of public security.
9	March 2, 1898	The [illegible] case
10	April 19, „	The [illegible] case.

Table (I).—Area of the Trebizond Province in 1898.

Districts (Sandjaks).	Sub-districts (Cazas).	No. of Cantons (Nahiyes).	Area. [illegible]	Forest.	Pasture.	Total.
Trebizond	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]770
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	311,410
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	227,270
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	250,000
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	100,045
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	177,785
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	187,170
	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Samsoun	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	58,180	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	28,885	[illegible]	7,245
	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	127,205
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	..	222,840	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	77,50[illegible]	[illegible]	19,140
			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Lazistan	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible],150
	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	571,210
	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	[illegible]	74,72[illegible]	202,290
		[illegible]	74[illegible]	269,000	[illegible]	1,048,650
Gumushkhaneh	[illegible]	2	[illegible]	16,590	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	1	[illegible]	76,135	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible],200	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	12,07[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Total	Acres	..	[illegible]	1,4[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	Square miles	..	[illegible]	2,241	[illegible]	12,587

Table (II).—Population of the Trebizond Province in 1898 compared with 1885.

Creed.	Trebizond. Male.	Trebizond. Female.	Samsoun. Male.	Samsoun. Female.	Lazistan. Male.	Lazistan. Female.	Gumushkhaneh. Male.	Gumushkhaneh. Female.	Number of Souls. Male.	Number of Souls. Female.	Totals. 1898.	Totals. 1885.
[illegible]	240,471	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	73,201	[illegible]	11,167	[illegible]	[illegible]	932,716	798,000
[illegible]	40,011	37,417	47,962	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	88,476	181,044	150,000
[illegible]	13,690	12,978	9,682	[illegible]	[illegible]	20	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	47,196	12,200
[illegible]	701	[illegible]	21	[illegible]	..	..			744	740	1,484	1,200
[illegible]	272	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		..			548	554	1,102	1,000
[illegible]	102	[illegible]	[illegible]	20		..		..	161	112	273	200
Total	295,247	[illegible]	[illegible]	156,747	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	572,400	..	..
Grand total	[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		1,163,815		1,163,815	992,600
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		12,587		..	12,370
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		92		..	80

TABLE (III).—Schools of the Trebizond Province in 1898

Districts.	Creed.	Schools.			Pupils.			Percentage on Population.	
		Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.
Trebizond	Moslems	728	[illegible]	1,1[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	12	6·65
	Greeks	101	45	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	19	5·10
	Armenians, &c.	25	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	11·[illegible]	5
	Total	854	156	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	13	4·50
[illegible]	Moslems	159	212	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	18,8[illegible]	11·75	4·90
	Greeks	104	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	13	[illegible]·27
	Armenians, &c.	22	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]·20	6·50
	Total	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	27,[illegible]	12	5
[illegible]	Moslems	107	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	17,27[illegible]	[illegible]	7·[illegible]
	Greeks	2	[illegible]		[illegible]	23	[illegible]	18	5·50
	Armenians, &c.	..					..	..	..
	Total	109	19	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	17,[illegible]	16	7·60
Gumushkhaneh	Moslems	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	11·50	[illegible]
	Greeks	12	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	26	2·16
	Armenians	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1
	Total	204	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	15	8·10
Whole vilayet	Moslems	1,752	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	82,082	12·20	5·10
	Greeks	246	142	388	[illegible]	[illegible]	21,78[illegible]	17	7
	Armenians, &c.	51	27	78	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	12·28	5·52
	Totals	2,049	1,058	3,107	77,[illegible]	30,717	108,382	13·13	5·36
	Total of population	..	..	..	591,43[illegible]	572,400	1,16[illegible]	9·31	

TABLE (IV).—GOVERNORS of the Trebizond Province in 1898.

No.	Residence.		Name.	Age.	Birthplace.	Race.	Yearly Salary.	Last Post.	Date of present Appointment.	Remarks.
	District.	Town.								
1	[illegible]	Trebizond	Cadri Bey	54	Constantinople	[illegible]	£T 1,800	Constantinople	May 1892	Very good. Twice Sub-Minister of Finance
..	Ditto	Ditto	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ditto	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ditto	September 1896	Greek. Has been Revenue Inspector at Sivas.
1	[illegible]	Of	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	144	[illegible]	November 1897	Corrupt.
2	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] Hussein Avni	[illegible]	Trebizond	[illegible]	144	[illegible]	January 1897	Once good, now dishonest
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ibrahim [illegible]	32	Constantinople	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	January 1899	More scholastic than energetic.
4	[illegible]	[illegible]	Mehmed [illegible]	52	Ditto	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	May 1895	Incapable, but honest.
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	February 1898	Ditto, ditto.
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	40	Trebizond	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	June 1896	Good, old, and experienced
7	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Constantinople	April 1898	Moderate
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	..	Trebizond	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	January 1899	Good and honest
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	54	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	July 1895	Good, capable, and honest. Knows French.
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] Mouradian	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Constantinople	October 1896	Armenian. Was Public Prosecutor here.
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	25	Ordu	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	March 1898	A graduate, good and active
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] Hakki	[illegible]	Trebizond	[illegible]	144	[illegible]	November 1897	[illegible] Kaimakam in the vilayet.
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ditto	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	December 1898	A nonentity.
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Osman Bey	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ditto	[illegible]	[illegible]	November 1897	Bad. A [illegible] protégé.
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Moustafa Kiazim Pasha	[illegible]	Ditto	Ditto	144	[illegible]	December 1898	Ditto ditto.
III	[illegible]	[illegible]	Djevad Pasha	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Constantinople	July 1895	Weak but good.
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ismail Hakki	[illegible]	Albania	[illegible]	144	[illegible]	November 1897	Good and experienced
2	[illegible]	[illegible]	Rustem Bey	[illegible]	Constantinople	Ditto	144	[illegible]	August 1896	A graduate. Honest, but self-willed
IV	[illegible]	Gumushkhaneh	Djemal Bey	[illegible]	Constantinople	[illegible]	[illegible]	Constantinople	July 18[illegible]	[illegible] and not honest
..	Ditto	Ditto	[illegible]	64	Ditto	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ditto	October 1896	Greek. Was in Constantinople Commercial Court.
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	60	Anatolia	[illegible]	144	Ditto	November 1898	Honest, but infirm.
2	[illegible]	[illegible]	Ali Riza	[illegible]	Lazistan	Ditto	144	[illegible]	January 1894	Bad
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Osman Bey	[illegible]	Ditto	Ditto	144	[illegible]	June 1897	Insignificant.

TABLE (V).—BUDGETS of the Trebizond Vilayet for the financial years 1893–94 and 1897–98.

Revenue.	1313 (1897–98).	1309 (1893–94).
	£T	£T
[illegible] Tax (Verghi)	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] Exemption Tax	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	11,[illegible]
Sundries	[illegible]	11,80[illegible]
Total Revenue	431,51[illegible]	370,6[illegible]

Expenditure.	1313 (1897–98).	1309 (1893–94).
	£T	£T
[illegible]	[illegible]	10,178
[illegible]	[illegible]	12,703
[illegible]	[illegible]	61,676
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	21,[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] Civil List	[illegible]	11,800
Assigned [illegible] and other [illegible]	117,[illegible]	209,671
Total Expenditure	431,515	370,631

No. 34.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 91.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 28, 1899.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 76 of the 23rd instant, and in reply to your Lordship's despatch No. 42 of the 18th instant, respecting the closing of the Armenian orphanages, I have the honour to report as follows:—

I am not sure whether the orphanage at Zeitun is still open, but I am informed that those at Pallu and Chinkush have been closed, and that the orphans in the similar establishment at Diarbekir have been sent out to private houses, where they are supported by the missionary funds.

I did not fail to make earnest representations to the Turkish Government to dissuade them from persisting in this course. I pointed out the humanitarian and non-political character of the motives that had inspired charitable persons in England and the United States to found and support those establishments; that the orphans were taken from the poorest classes of the population who had no private means of subsistence, still less of education; that the orphans were for the most part without parents or friends to look after them; and that it would be a cruel and inhuman act to close the orphanages when neither the Imperial Government nor the Armenian Patriarch were able to make other and suitable provision for the care and education of the orphans.

I denied that the orphanages were, as a rule, used as a means of proselytizing, or that the missionaries prevented the children receiving instruction in their own religion, and I warned the Minister of the misery and of the bad effect which would be caused by such arbitrary and unjustifiable proceeding.

Tewfik Pasha replied, without contesting the statements made, that the Turkish Government had been asked by the Armenian Patriarch (Mgr. Ormanian) to close the orphanages, and that the action of the authorities had been taken at the instigation of His Beatitude. He further said that he would send me a copy of a letter from the Patriarch to the Grand Vizier to this effect. I have not yet received this document, so that this point is not yet clear, but I may remind your Lordship that the Patriarch denied both verbally and in his letter inclosed in my despatch above mentioned that he had taken any action of the kind described. It may possibly be that there is some confusion between the Gregorian and the Catholic Patriarch, for there is reason to believe that the latter views with considerable mistrust the establishing of these orphanages, which he fears may eventually withdraw many of his fold from his care.

The Pallu and Diarbekir orphanages are, I understand, conducted, in part at all events, by German missionaries. I have, therefore, endeavoured to interest the German Ambassador in the subject, and I understand that he has made inquiries at the Porte, and that the German Pastor has been sent to Armenia to report on the condition of the various orphanages.

The United States' Minister (Mr. Strauss), to whom I have also spoken on the subject, informs me that he has, in conversation with Tewfik Pasha, strongly deprecated any interference with those orphanages without very definite and clear reasons. Unfortunately none of them have, I believe, obtained Firmans from the Sublime Porte.

If I cannot obtain permission for those orphanages which have already been closed to be reopened, I hope to dissuade the Imperial Government from taking any action against the others.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 35.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 95.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 2, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 17 of the 19th January last, forwarding two despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah respecting the state of affairs in the

Yemen, I have the honour to transmit an extract from a private letter to Mr. Weakley, from a gentleman residing in that province, on the same subject.

I have ventured to trouble your Lordship with this extract, as it gives an account of the present situation differing widely from the officially-inspired reports appearing from time to time in the Turkish press of successes achieved by the Turkish troops and of the satisfactory progress of the pacification of the Yemen.

In communicating this extract to the Embassy, Mr. Weakley, who is now at Alexandria, states that he learns from persons lately arrived from the Yemen that small-pox is decimating the villages on the coast, and that although rains have fallen and "durra" has been sown, the mortality is so great that there are not hands to attend to the fields, and, consequently, another year of scarcity is to be feared.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Extract from Private Letter to Mr. Weakley.

THE stories circulated about the "brigands" having submitted are all false, for things are as unsettled to-day as they were at the commencement of the outbreak. The Mushir is in the field at the head of thirty-four battalions, but he finds that the Arabs are not to be got at. They wait in the mountains until the troops have passed and then return.

When Shibil was taken the Mushir wired to the Vali, informing him that the military operations were over, and that, the country having been pacified, the Civil Administration should be at once established. The Hodeida Mutessarif received orders to proceed to that district to organize the Civil Administration, but found the whole place had been deserted. The Vali was informed, and there was a row between the Mushir and the Mutessarif, who was recalled to Hodeida.

The troops are completely demoralized: desertions take place daily, and it is expected that there will be a wholesale massacre of Turks, or that the troops will eventually go over to the other side. The Mushir is entirely cut off from his base, for he has all the Arabs in his rear.

It is said the news sent to Constantinople is got up by the Mushir, who wishes to stand well with the Palace.

No. 36.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 99.)
Constantinople, March 2, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a journal by Mr. Spring Rice of affairs in Eastern Asia Minor and Mesopotamia during the month of January 1899.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 36.

[illegible] Asia Minor and Mesopotamia during the month of January 1899.

Armenians.—News was received from Kharput (Mr. Jones, 20th January and [illegible] were being [illegible] and the children dispersed.

On inquiry at Constantinople, it appeared that the orphanages in question were owned or managed by Germans and Americans; that the German Embassy was interesting itself but half-heartedly; and that the United States' Legation was informed that the request that the orphanages should be closed came through the Patriarchate from a high Armenian official. The Patriarch denied that any general request had been made, but said that in the case of one orphanage (Zeitun) evidence

was to hand showing that the missionaries in whose charge it was had broken their pledge as to not proselytizing.

In a communication privately made, it was stated, without confirmation, that the request had emanated from the *Catholic* Patriarch—not the Gregorian. In this document it was stated that the Catholic Patriarch was doing all in his power to discredit the Protestant missionaries, and that the Porte, equally hating all Christian sects, was only too ready to meet any suggestions of this sort half-way.

The United States' Minister stated that he had been informed that the attention of the Porte had been called to the danger that would be incurred by the State if a large number of Armenian children grew up in the Protestant faith and formed a homogeneous colony under the patronage of the free Protestant Powers.

Military Exemption Tax.—News was received from Kharput that it was intended to impose this tax on the Armenian population; indeed, measures were already being taken to that end, and it was, as reported, the intention of the authorities to employ soldiers as tax-collectors (Mr. Jones, 28th December). It was pointed out to the Porte that the latter measure was against the Regulations, and that the imposition of the tax would cause immense suffering. The Patriarchate, and subsequently the Embassy, received a notification that the immunity from the military exemption tax, already granted for two years, would be extended for another year.

The Patriarchate announced this decision of the Porte in an Encyclical, calling on the Armenian congregations to offer up prayers for the Sultan ("Levant Herald").

Destitution.—The news already received of destitution in the Monil district appears to apply to the Kharput and Erzeroum districts (Kharput, 12th January; Erzeroum, 27th January). The destitution must last and increase till the new harvest; if the inhabitants are forced to consume their seed-corn it may last much longer. Actual deaths from famine are of constant occurrence. The soldiers are given long furlough on account of the difficulty of feeding them.

Kurds.—An interesting description has been received from the Consular Agent at Mosul of the wholesale depredation of the Kuchar Kurds. They are under the protection of Zekki Pasha, and apparently also of the home Government. The late Mushir reported their proceedings to Constantinople, but without effect. Their plundering operations are on a larger scale, and are increasing. The Kurds appear to be in the enjoyment of the protection of the minor officials and the Courts, which share in the plunder (Mosul, 31st December).

A new Vali has lately been appointed to the Vilayet, Hazim Effendi by name. He is a man of no intelligence or influence, and is said to be ready to take any bribe, however small. Mr. Block called the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the state of things existing in the Mosul district, and the absolute necessity of doing something to prevent the spread of disorder.

From a Report, dated Van, 22nd January, it appeared that the authorities are making some attempt to collect taxes from the Kurds—some tribes, indeed, have paid who have enjoyed immunity from all taxation for seven years. In the wildest of all the Kurd districts—the country of the Dersun tribe—a regiment of Hamidié cavalry is being raised (Erzeroum, 21st January) in pursuance of the Porte's policy of raising these regiments from the Kurdish tribes and subjecting this nation to discipline.

But there seems to be an unaccountable delay in appointing Imperial officers; for instance, the Ka'imakamate of Bergu had been long vacant. The civil and military authorities seemed to find it impossible to work together, although it was reported from Erzeroum (21st January) that the Vali and Mushir had at last been reconciled.

An attempt is being made to enrol the Dersun Kurds in a regiment of Hamidié cavalry.

Dr. Belek.—The feud between the civil and military powers is not entirely at an end; that, at any rate, the military authorities are not yet prepared to submit to the Porte, is shown by the case of Dr. Belek.

Timur Pasha, the father of the real assailant, but himself innocent, has been arrested. The real culprits are still at large and apparently enjoy the protection of Zekki Pasha, the Mushir. Dr. Belek now asks for 11,340*l*. damages, but not for the arrest or punishment of his assailants. There is some reason to suppose that the principal culprit, Hussein Pasha, is befriended by Russia (Erzeroum, 22nd January).

Nestorian Mission.—The Archbishop of Canterbury has withdrawn his Mission, leaving the field free to the Russian Mission, who have made great progress in converting the Nestorians now resident in the neighbourhood of Urmia. The Russians regard the field of their activity as ending at the Turkish frontier (Van, 16th January).

Captain Maunsell points out that the easiest route for Russia to the Persian Gulf lies through the Urmia Valley, thence viâ Rania to Kukuk, by an easy pass to Bagdad. The possession of a strong vantage point in the new Russian-protected Nestorian colony in Urmia will be of the greatest value strategically. The position of the Turks at Van would thus be turned (30th January.)

No. 37.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 100.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, March 2, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a copy of the letter from the Armenian Patriarch Ormanian to the Grand Vizier, referred to in my despatch No. 91 of the 28th ultimo. I also inclose copies of telegrams between the Armenian Bishop of Pallu and His Beatitude.

I am afraid this correspondence shows but too clearly that the Patriarch's action in this matter has neither been straightforward nor blameless, but as his letter was sent to me confidentially by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, it ought not, I think, to be given to the Armenian Relief Committee.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 37.

The Armenian Patriarch to the Grand Vizier.

January 26 (February 7), 1899.

I AM compelled to draw the attention of the Government to a state of things that has long existed but has now become aggravated and is of great moment to our church and community. In the Ottoman Empire the former orthodox sects and the established religions have from time immemorial been allowed perfect freedom and security; and it has never been allowed when one community has fallen into distress and suffering for the members of the other religions to turn it to their profit and try and capture their souls.

This, doubtless, will not be allowed now that the Armenians, according to the reports that come in one after another, have fallen into an extreme of poverty and destitution.

Now the Armenians who are without means of subsistence have been taken in by all sorts of promises as to help and protection from Protestant and Catholic missionaries. Especially in the town and neighbourhood of Van is there not only distress but famine; there the Armenians are promised pecuniary help on condition that they leave their church and go over to Rome and change their "Tezkere-i-Osmanié," and alter the registers; and they are told that they will be allowed to migrate as formerly to work for their living: thus with promises of help and protection from the nations whose subjects they are to become, the missionaries at Van have made these wretched people enter the Roman Church. These propagandists, or rather political agitators, have established a place of worship and a bishopric with a view to extending their fields of operation.

It is evident from what has been reported, that those who have elected to change their religious views, were not really so inclined from the point of view of religion, [illegible] political advantages by changing their church.

For its subjects to be obliged to get their daily bread by changing their spiritual state is scarcely in accordance with the glory of this empire; therefore, I beg that strict orders be sent to the proper places to absolutely forbid conversion on these grounds, and that the Iradé, which I received the other day, may be published, and I pray that it may be declared illegal to change one's religion, and that the Vali of Van and the other Valis may be sent orders by telegraph from the Sublime Porte as to the changing of the Tezkere-i-Osmanié."

Inclosure 2 in No. 37.

The Armenian Patriarch to the Armenian Bishop of Pallu.

(Telegraphic.)

February 7 (19), 1899.

IT is said that the Armenian villages opened at Pallu and Chinkush for Armenian children by American missionaries have been closed.

Is this true? If so, for what reason? Please let me know at once.

Inclosure 3 in No. 37.

The Armenian Bishop of Pallu to the Armenian Patriarch.

(Telegraphic.)

[*Undated.*]

IT is true that the orphanages at Pallu and Chinkush were closed a few days ago by the local authorities. We do not know why.

In a letter that arrived on the 18th (30th) January, 1899, it was stated that owing to the orphanages opened by German missionaries at Diarbekir having been opened without permission, and in consequence of the complaints of the Mahommedans, the orphanages were closed by the local authorities, and the orphans were put out to live in different houses for a remuneration.

No. 38.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 11, 1899.

I AM directed by the Marquess of Salisbury [illegible] accompanying copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople,* reporting the steps taken to obtain from the Turkish authorities of the Hedjaz compensation for certain British Indian merchants, residing in Mecca, Medina, and Jeddah, for robberies committed between 1892 and 1898.

Lord Salisbury proposes, with Lord George Hamilton's concurrence, to approve the terms of the *note verbale* on this subject, addressed by Sir N. O'Conor to the Sublime Porte on the 20th ultimo.

I am, &c.

(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 39.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 13.)

(No. 107.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, March 7, 1899.

I TOOK the opportunity of a visit to the Sublime Porte yesterday to draw Tewfik Pasha's attention to the [illegible] claims, to the correspondence which had passed on the subject, and to the lapse of time since those claims had been presented. The delay was causing great hardship and in some cases had caused the ruin of the claimants. I thought the time had now come for a settlement, and I hoped his Excellency would agree in this.

Tewfik Pasha said that the papers concerning this question had been kept at the Palace and that he did not know the Sultan's intentions. In any case the claims would have to be submitted to a Joint Commission.

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* No. 25.

I said there was no objection to this course. I understood, however, that the Sultan was opposed to a settlement in great part because it involved a recognition of his responsibility for the massacres. If so, I would remind his Excellency that claims of a somewhat similar nature had been paid by the United States, France and England, as well as by other countries, and that I believed the United States formally disclaimed their responsibility though they paid the amount.

I said I would recur to the subject before long.

In connection with this subject it has occurred to me whether an opportunity is not presented for the settlement of these and other claims against the Turkish Government by the arrangement for the conversion of the 1855 Loan. As your Lordship is aware from my despatch No. 105 of the 6th instant, the Sultan told me on the 4th that he agreed in principle to the Convention and had given orders that the 600,000*l.* resulting from the transaction should remain in England and be spent on the purchase of a cruiser. Whether the cruiser costs 500,000*l.* or 600,000*l.*, will not materially affect the condition of the Ottoman navy, whereas a settlement of all outstanding claims would certainly contribute to smooth the diplomatic relations between the two Governments. If your Lordship approves I could make a suggestion of this kind to the Sultan or to his First Secretary or Grand Vizier, and, perhaps, the matter might at the same time be mentioned to Anthopoulo Pasha as it would, emanating from your Lordship, have more chance of being accepted by the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 40.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 13.)

(No. 114.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 7, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 100 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to report that I spoke to the Grand Vizier yesterday in respect of the orphanages in Anatolia which have been closed or threatened to be closed by the Turkish authorities.

I asked his Highness whether his Government wished to prevent funds coming from England and America for such a purely humanitarian and philanthropic purpose. If so it would be very easy to divert them to other countries where distress and poverty likewise existed. If he did not it would be well to give immediate instructions to the Valis not to interfere with the orphanages.

His Highness replied that he was grateful for the pecuniary relief sent to Armenia by charitable persons in England and that he believed the orphanages to be good and charitable institutions which ought not to be disturbed.

In conclusion his Highness gave me to understand that he would endeavour to prevent any further action being taken against these establishments.

I also reported to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the desperate accounts I had received of the distress and poverty in the district of Van and the insufficiency of the charitable donations received from the Armenian Committees and other sources to preserve the people from absolute want and hunger.

Since making these representations I hear that the Sultan has contributed 3,000*l.* towards the relief of the more destitute Armenians.

I am afraid, however, that a few months hence the distress will be still greater among Christians and Mussulmans alike. The state of destitution to which the inhabitants are already reduced may be judged by the specimen of famine bread sent herewith.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 41.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 13.)

(No. 113.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 8, 1899.*

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 508 of the 28th September, 1898, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, respecting the payment of taxes by the Druses of the Lebanon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 41.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 7.)
Sir, *Damascus, February 23, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. [illegible] of the 16th September, 1898, and several others previously written on the same subject, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that according to the information received it would appear that Sheikh Selim Naufal who, as reported in a previous despatch, is officially recognized as a sort of go-between between the Authorities and the Druses of the Jebel, has written from Sueda to say that further negotiations have been in progress lately between the Mutessarif of the Hauran and the Druses on the subject of the taxes due from them. The former, it appears, informed the latter that he proposed to send Hawalés (horsemen) round throughout all the districts of the Jebel with orders to collect the taxes, and in case of refusal to pay, to obtain the signatures of the recusants attached to a written statement of the reasons which impelled them to this line of conduct. The Druses did not approve of this method of collecting the taxes, which, however, they professed willingness to pay if they were informed of their nature, and of the amount expected of them. The Mutessarif told them that the taxes were, as they should know very well, the tithe, the sheep tax, and the Verghi (house and land taxes), and the amount fixed by the Government was 100,000 piastres.

I am not informed as to what action was taken subsequently, but I have serious doubts as to the existence of any real intention on the part of the Druses to comply with the Government demands.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 42.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 13.)

(No. 115.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 9, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Armenian Relief Committee, that the Turkish journals published to-day, state that the Sultan has [illegible] the maintenance of children who have neither father nor mother.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 43.

Sir M. Durand to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 9.)
My Lord,
Tehran, February 1, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 109 of the 12th December, regarding the massacre of nine Armenians by the Governor of Khoi and Salmas.

I had brought the matter to the notice of the Sadr-i-Azam before the despatch arrived, as reported in my despatch No. 4 of the 10th January, but knowing his Highness to be sensitive with regard to any direct instructions received from England, I took an opportunity of mentioning the case again. He assured me he attached much importance to it, and said that he had deputed a special officer to take charge of the Khoi and Salmas district. This officer, the Ikbal-ul-Mulk, formerly Governor of Yezd, came to see me two days ago. He is old and infirm and has a very bad reputation, but he volunteered many assurances as to what he would do to prevent further trouble in this quarter. Meanwhile I hear that the Zerghaum-ul-Mulk has received a sword of honour for his gallant conduct.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. M. DURAND.

No. 44.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 123.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, March 13, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus respecting the dispatch by the Turkish authorities of a punitive expedition against the marauding Bedouin tribes of El Jebel.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 44.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 9.)
Sir,
Damascus, February 27, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the semi-nomadic Arab tribe known as El Okaïdat, whose tents are now pitched at a place called Segal, situate about thirty hours (say 90 miles) to the east of Damascus, complained to the Vali about ten days ago that they had been robbed of 1,000 sheep by the Bedouins of El Jebel, otherwise known as Es-Safa, *i.e.*, the Ghiath, Messaïd, Hassan, Sherefat, and other tribes, the first named, however, being the chief offenders. The Okaïdat also complained that two members of their tribe, viz., one man and one woman had been killed by the marauders.

The authorities here, it is alleged, remonstrated with the complainants for camping at so great a distance from the cultivated land which forms a belt extending for many miles round Damascus, and so making it extremely difficult for the troops to protect them in the hour of need. The Okaïdat replied that they had been encamped on previous occasions at a still greater distance from the city, and yet the Government tax-collectors had found no great difficulty in reaching them. What they meant to imply was that if they were not too far off to be taxed, they were not too far off to be protected.

However, the Vali, in response to their appeal, has dispatched two companies of regular troops and one company of mounted gendarmes under the command of Husrev Pasha, the Commanding Officer of the Gendarmerie force of the vilayet, with orders to pursue and punish the marauders and obtain restitution, if possible, of the stolen sheep.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

P.S.—It is asserted, with what truth I cannot say, that, in addition to the above, one or two companies of regular troops are leaving the Hama district in order to join Husrev Pasha's expedition to Es-Safa.

W. S. R.

No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 134.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, March 18, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout reporting the frequent occurrence in that port of assaults on Christians by armed Mussulmans.

Your Lordship will observe that representations have been made to the Vali by Mr. Drummond Hay as well as by his French and Italian colleagues.

I am inquiring of Mr. Hay as to the result of these representations, and, should I learn from him that they have produced no improvement in the situation, I propose to bring the matter to the notice of the Grand Vizier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 45.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)
Sir,
Beirout, March 2, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that public order in Beirout has been for some time in an unsatisfactory condition. Cases of assault on Christians by armed Mussulmans are now of more frequent occurrence, and have occasionally taken place even during daytime in the largest thoroughfares. This state of the town is not, in my opinion, attributable to any increase in fanaticism amongst Mahommedans, as many Christians believe. It is the inevitable consequence of a badly-organized body of police, whose ranks contain many men in league with the worst characters of the town. The latter are also encouraged by seeing notorious criminals at large, who have been acquitted by the Courts on false evidence, as no one dares to bear witness either against them or any of their gang.

On two separate occasions my Italian and French colleagues have lately made forcible representations to the Vali, the former on account of an alleged attack by a Mussulman on his honorary Dragoman in the chief public square when he was returning from the theatre, and the French Consul-General interfered on behalf of a Maronite who was chased and fired at in the afternoon by three Mussulmans and a gendarme. The pistol bullet struck the wall of a Maronite church during Mass time, creating a commotion amongst the congregation, some of whom, headed by their priest, went in a body to the French Consulate-General and from thence to the Serai to demand protection.

I called yesterday on the Vali and, without entering into the merits of the different cases, urged him to lose no time in restoring confidence among the inhabitants and in adopting stringent and effective measures for the public safety of the town. His Excellency was of opinion that matters had been generally misrepresented and exaggerated by over-excited and timorous Christians, but he admitted that reforms were required in the police force, and said that he had already issued orders on the subject, which he hoped would have satisfactory results.

My German colleague, with whom I had previously conferred, made similar representations to the Vali, and I trust that his Excellency will not fail to act up to his assurances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 46.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 136.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 16, 1899.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 10 of the 21st ultimo, respecting the distress prevailing in the Vilayet of Van, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul in that town, giving further particulars on the same subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 8.)
Sir, *Van, February 20, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report, in continuation of my despatch No. 4 of the 16th January, that the distress among the Armenian villages in this vilayet continues to increase. The local Committee, under the presidency of the Muavin, with the Armenian Bishop as a member, has done very well in collecting some £ T. 600 here, and distributing relief in the town and neighbouring villages.

The Vali subscribed £ T. 20, and has been most assiduous in assisting the poor without distinction of creed.

Also he has forced the sale of wheat hoarded by local merchants, both Armenian and Turk, in the hopes of a further rise in price, and has fined the bakers for mixing earth and other ingredients with the bread.

Hassan Pasha, the Mayor* of the town, whose special duty it is to prevent such hoarding of wheat, has been the worst offender in this respect himself.

Hussein Pasha, the celebrated Kurd Chief of Patnotz, has also collected a very considerable amount of wheat, mainly by robbery from Armenian villages, which he will sell when prices are sufficiently high.

I have strongly urged on the Vali the advisability of forcing him to sell, and he hopes to be able to do so when he has money available to buy wheat for the soldiers here.

The price of bread in Van has been diminishing slightly, but has now risen again, and is to-day 70 paras the oke, as the stocks are becoming exhausted.

The distribution by the local Committee and our relief fund have not been allowed to interfere with each other, as each has been arranged to deal with separate districts.

The local efforts have now become exhausted, and more relief is urgently required; although while the local effort was in progress I did not think it necessary to ask for more help.

I have ridden out to some of the villages in the Timar region, 25 miles north of Van, and am also acquainted with the villages near by, and I think that from one-third to one-half the population of the Timar villages are actually starving, subsisting on various seeds, and a little black bread looking like charcoal. They have only a few rags as bedding in this severe winter.

I satisfied myself that they had duly received the wheat sent out by the Local Relief Committee.

Karchikan and Kawash districts south of the lake are also suffering extremely, and for them it has been arranged to buy wheat in Bitlis where prices are lower.

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* Beledie Reisi.

The figures given me by the Armenian Bishop are 20,000 people actually in want of food to keep them alive from day to day, and from what I have seen I do not think this is too great an estimate.

I would venture to suggest that 2,000*l.* is urgently needed for the present to keep these unfortunate people alive.

None of the new seasons' wheat can be expected for at least three months, and it is probable that most of the stores laid by for spring sowing will be consumed for food.

I am informed that not for many years has the feeling between Christian and Moslem been so good as it has been during the Ramazan and Baïram just past.

Most of this improvement is due to the impartial actions of his Excellency the Vali, Tahir Pasha

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 47.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 73.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 22, 1899.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 87 of the 27th ultimo, inclosing a [illegible] regard to the general condition of his Consular District during the past year.

I request that your Excellency will convey to Mr. Longworth my thanks for this Report.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 48.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 74.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 24, 1899.*

I HAVE had under my consideration, in communication with the Secretary of State for India, your Excellency's despatch No. 65 of the 20th ultimo, reporting the steps taken to obtain compensation for certain British Indian merchants residing in Mecca, Medina, and Jeddah [illegible] the Hedjaz between 1892 and 1898.

Her Majesty's Government approve the terms of the *note verbale* addressed by your Excellency to the Sublime Porte on this subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 49.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 27.)

(No. 139.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 22, 1899.*

IN my despatch No. 29 of the 2nd February I gave some account of the struggle which is going on, both locally and at Constantinople, over the election of a new Patriarch of Syria or Antioch, the Œcumenical Patriarch desiring the choice of a Greek prelate in opposition to the packed majority of the Holy Synod of Antioch, which, under Russian influence, is supporting a list of native Syrians.

The issue is of considerable importance, as the victory of one of the local candidates would materially strengthen the Russian element in Syria, by removing the opposition which a prelate subservient to the Patriarchate at Constantinople might be expected to offer to the prevailing Russian policy of bringing the Syrian schools and churches under Russian control.

At the date of my above-mentioned despatch the Russian majority in the Synod was 7 to 5. It has now been strengthened, as appears from the inclosed further despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, by removing the Metropolitan of Tarsus and Adana, who favoured the minority, from the office of *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate of Antioch, and giving the place to the Bishop of Laodicea, an adherent of the Russian party.

The presidency of the Synod has thus fallen into hostile hands, and the Greek party is becoming seriously alarmed.

I learn that a list of candidates, containing only names of local Arab ecclesiastics, has now been submitted to the Porte.

The Œcumenical Patriarch has appealed to the Grand Vizier and the Minister of Public Worship, but was given to understand that the Sultan had been won over to the opposite camp by the perseverance of the Russian Ambassador. A deputation from the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Alexandria which waited on the Porte a day or two ago has not been more successful, and everything goes to show that the prospects of the local aspirants are in the ascendant.

A representative of the Jerusalem and Constantinople Patriarchs called at the Embassy on the 16th instant to invoke my assistance. I gave him no encouragement, but requested Mr. Block to call the attention of the Sublime Porte privately to what was passing in Syria, and to the danger of giving official support to the Russian propaganda. Mr. Block mentioned the matter incidentally in conversation with the Sultan's chief Secretary and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but he gathered that in both quarters it was felt that Russian pressure was too strong to be seriously opposed. Tewfik Pasha appeared to be quite aware of the situation, but he held out no hope of successful resistance on the part of the Porte. He stated confidentially that the Russian Ambassador had himself spoken to him on the subject, pointing out that a system of autocephalous Patriarchates independent of Constantinople would render more difficult any combination on the part of the Orthodox Church to obtain political privileges.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 49.

[illegible] N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.)
Sir,
Damascus, March 8, 1899.

WITH reference to the final paragraph in my despatch No. 27 of the 25th May last, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Vali summoned Mgr. Germanos (Bishop of Cilicia), Mgr. Malateos (Bishop of Lattakia), and Mgr. Gerasimos (Bishop of Zahlé) into his presence yesterday, the 7th instant, and, addressing Mgr. Germanos, informed him that he regretted to say that he had received a Vizirial Order based on an Imperial Iradé, in accordance with which he, Mgr. Germanos, was deposed from his position of *locum tenens* of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, and Mgr. Malateos appointed to succeed him. The Vali then directed Mgr. Malateos to take the seat of honour next himself which had previously been occupied by Mgr. Germanos, and at the same time handed him (Malateos) the formal letter of appointment in virtue of which he becomes *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate.

Nazim Pasha then addressed a few words to him directing him to proceed as soon as possible to the election of a Patriarch, adding that the two "Greek" Bishops of Aleppo and Diarbekir respectively, who, as I reported in the despatch under reference, were held to be disqualified for election to the Patriarchal throne, on the ground that they had not yet completed their seventh year in the episcopate, should not be so disqualified.

So far as one can see, there are no longer any obstacles to the holding of the election, which will probably take place shortly.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 50.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received March 27.)

(No. 142.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, March 22, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copy of a despatch from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing reports from the Rev. J. C. Martin on Armenian relief work at Hadjin and in the surrounding district during the years 1885–98.

In compliance with Colonel Massy's request, I have forwarded a copy of his despatch to Sir W. Whittall.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.)
[illegible], March [illegible], 1899.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith three copies of a statement received from the Rev. J. C. Martin, who is in charge of the Armenian relief works which I started, with his aid, some two and a-half years ago, at Hadjin in the Adana Vilayet.

I would beg that your Excellency might be so good as to forward a copy of this statement, as well as of my present despatch, to Sir W. Whittall, for his information, and for transmission to his Grace the Duke of Westminster, if considered advisable.

It will be seen from Mr. Martin's Report that the Hadjin relief works continue to be a complete success. Instead of a promiscuous distribution of relief to every comer, without any return, thereby encouraging pauperism of a degrading character, we are obtaining the following gratifying results:—

We have supplied agricultural implements, seed, oxen, &c., to the Christian villagers who were plundered and left penniless during the recent massacres, besides rebuilding many of their houses, burnt after the flight in terror of their owners to Hadjin town, thus saving many hundred villagers from starvation. I myself assisted at the return of many of these to their homes when, except for our daily relief, they were almost starving in Hadjin, and when, had they not been assured of our strong support, they would have refused, through fear, to venture back. They are now prosperous and independent of further aid.

We have fed and clothed the sick, aged, and infirm poor, both of Hadjin as well as of the outlying Christian villages, since 1895 to this day.

Men, women and children have received good daily wages at our relief works for the past two years who would otherwise have starved, or who would have been degraded by begging until our funds were exhausted, when they would have succumbed. Now, through our aid, they have become respectable members of the Armenian community.

Many of the Hadjin people, beggared and houseless after the late terrible fire, are now comfortably homed by us, earning their living.

We have done much towards the improvement of the town of Hadjin, which used to be a bye-word in the whole country for squalor and dirt. Bridges and roads have been made, streets paved, water courses laid to convey pure water to Hadjin, and to one other chief town in the district.

Employment has been given to many, cutting and sawing timber, quarrying stone, &c. Had we not undertaken these highly useful public works we should yet have been obliged to expend the funds to relieve the starving whom we thus employed.

In giving your Excellency this summary, by no means an exhaustive one, of some of the results of our efforts, I cannot do better than to quote the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Martin. He says:—

"As a result of the relief fund sent to Hadjin the people have not only been fed and clad, they have some 3,000*l.* worth of public works and farming stock, which are of constant benefit to them and, hence, they are to that extent better off than they would have been had they not been compelled to work, whilst the moral gain, although it cannot be expressed by figures, is no inconsiderable item."

I now turn to the subject of our relief handicrafts and industries established for over two years in the towns of Hadjin and Shahr.

These are now in a very flourishing condition, giving employment to many, besides bringing in a margin of profit, which is being utilised in the relief of the poor as well as in supporting our orphanages, where the children of many of the unfortunate victims of the late massacres are being cared for and educated under the kindly supervision of the ladies in charge of the Protestant Mission. These orphans are gradually absorbed into our works as they grow old enough to work, thus gaining a complete knowledge of a remunerative handicraft. The more intelligent amongst them will be selected as school-teachers, preachers, &c. In a couple of months eight of these orphans, having finished one year's apprenticeship, will be gaining a good livelihood in the works. They would have already starved had it not been for England's relief.

A very satisfactory matter connected with these industries, where we make native cotton stuffs, choice rugs, grind corn, carry on a good carpentry industry, is the fact that the capital invested has increased in value by some 25 per cent. Should we find a good sale in England for our rugs we shall be at once realizing a handsome annual profit on our outlay. This is a comparatively new branch, but the rugs now woven are of very excellent quality, so that they are certain to obtain a ready sale in England. Some ten very good ones will be ready to be supplied in June.

That these works are a great advantage to the whole district of Hadjin, and therefore, to the Turkish Government, is a fact upon which we must congratulate ourselves. By such enterprizes, carried out with judgment and tact, we help to break down Turkish [illegible], showing, as they do, that England's desire is to help the needy, not to give countenance to revolutionists. At the same time this assistance gives courage to the poor suffering Christians, and hope for the future that, so long as their actions cause no suspicion of sedition to rest upon them, Europe will not easily abandon them.

This, in my opinion, has been instrumental in keeping these people from acts of folly, followed by wholesale butchery by the Turks. Had it not been for the timely issue of relief from American and English charitable funds, had it not been for Her Majesty's Representative [illegible] together with that of the missionaries, controlled, to some extent, the actions of this Government, and gave hope to the Christian sufferers, we should have counted the victims by thousands where now there have been recorded hundreds. I was asked myself at Hadjin by the heads of the Armenian community, some two and a-half years ago, whether the Armenians who had then lost all hope, should start a revolt and end their unbearable existence in open fight. I replied that they must themselves choose. Was not everything already a little better than a year previously? Had [illegible] not already assisted them? If so, let them have patience [illegible] to their rescue. They replied that they would follow my advice and hope on. They have reason to be pleased now, I think, that they did so. This result—the chief one—I attribute to English and American relief, for, had I told them to hope while leaving them to starve, I cannot imagine that my words would have had the desired effect. Nor is this an isolated case, the same result may be claimed all over this country.

I am anxious to record the fact that in these relief operations we have met with no real opposition on the part of the Turkish Government. At the commencement, it is true, certain questions were raised, but these I was able to settle, locally, without having recourse to higher authority.

In fact, the late Vali of Adana, Hussein Hilmi Pasha, now Governor-General in Yemen, while thanking me for the good we had done, laid down as guides, for future relief operations in the province, the lines upon which I carried out these duties. I mention this [illegible] in this country without raising suspicion or unpleasant political incidents.

I do not think that I have [illegible] of the result of our labour which, if they were often heart-rending and arduous, have brought their reward through their comparative success. My sole desire has been to draw up a fair report of what appears to me to have been done, so far by English and American philanthropy, at a time when at least one powerful European nation was working in a very opposite direction, the hope that such an account of the result attained may prove an incentive to our many generous fellow-countrymen to help us yet a little while longer in endeavouring to complete a task so well begun.

I have pointed out that Hadjin district, with its 50,000 Christians, is now comparatively prosperous. I regret to say the same of many other places. From all parts I hear a cry of distress. The Vice-Consuls serving in this Consular district tell of poverty and starvation. The missionaries appeal to us for further funds. Yet a little assistance and

all may be fairly well, should no untoward event arise. It is a pity, then, and unworthy of us, to turn our hand from the wheel just now. I appeal most earnestly, therefore, through your Excellency, to our countrymen for a little further aid just to tide over the present spring—not for Hadjin, which, with its well-organized relief works, is practically independent, but for those many less fortunate districts where less favourable circumstances and initial greater need, combined, have prevented for the present the same happy result.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

General Statement regarding use of Relief Funds in Hadjin and surrounding Villages 1895–98.

During the past three years we received from all sources £ T. 5,200 for relief work. Of this [illegible] general relief, while the balance, £ T. 1,200, was specially designated for the work of starting and promoting industries. (Recently £ T. 200 more have been granted to us by the Committee.)

[illegible] any work being demanded in return. A considerable part of this was used in the villages [illegible] the sick, the aged and infirm poor both in Hadjin and its outlying districts. £ T. 2,500 were given [illegible] kind of labour, the result being that we built, or helped to build, nearly fifty houses for the poor, [illegible] out one-third of Hadjin five years ago. Streets were paved, roads and bridges constructed, and new water-courses were opened, both in Hadjin and Garumsay, to conduct drinking water from the mountain to these towns. We had companies engaged in burning lime, quarrying stone, cutting timber, sawing boards, &c. In all this work very little, if indeed any [illegible] to prevent [illegible] people have not only been fed and clad, they have some 3,000 liras worth of public works and farming stock which are of daily benefit to them, and hence they are to that extent better off than they were before or than they would have been had they not been compelled to work, whilst the moral gain, although it cannot be estimated by figures, is no inconsiderable item.

The £ T. 1,200 designated for industries were used as follows:—

	£ T.
Land for building purposes	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	81·50
Wood [illegible]	[illegible]
Cotton yarn (for gingham)	220·00
[illegible]	[illegible]
Master workmen	50·00
Total	503·00

The balance, almost £ T. 700, was used for labour on the buildings and given to persons who would have had to receive aid in any event. For the industries in Hadjin we have erected altogether four buildings, two of them completed and two in course of construction, besides a partially-built house and a lot in Shahr. The £ T. 790 above indicated do not represent the actual cost or value of those buildings. Over £ T. 300 of the general relief fund were used in this direction, that is to say, parties who were receiving aid and who would have been given some kind of work to do were employed in furnishing stone, sand, &c., for our industrial buildings. For the £ T. 503 set forth above, the Relief Committee have undoubtedly a claim to that extent on the stock and on the buildings, and I fully approve of the property, as a whole, being held by, or for, the Committee until a satisfactory arrangement or settlement is made regarding this sum. The property is at present recorded in the name of a native, and I hold a deed from him. Were it not for a lawsuit which has been dragging its slow length along for the past six months, I would have had the property transferred to my own name before this.

At present these works are used to a large extent for the benefit of the orphans, both boys and girls. Hitherto the profits have been very small, but my hope is that, in the not very distant future, these industries will supply work to all our orphans so that our orphanages will be entirely self-supporting. From next spring on, that is after May, some eight of our orphan children will receive enough wages to enable them to support themselves. Some of them will have been with us at that date, that is, in the industries one year, others only seven months. If there shall be a surplus of earnings, after orphanages have been provided for, it will be devoted to promote schools and educational institutions. A Committee of trustworthy men here, Gregorians and Protestants will be appointed to safeguard all interests, that is, provided the Armenian Relief Committee approve of the plan. It remains for that Committee to [illegible] how much, if any, of the already-mentioned £ T. 500 they will want back, should the property be used for the purposes I have indicated.

(Signed) J. C. MARTIN.

Extract from a Private Letter to Acting Consul Massy from the Rev. J. C. Martin.

[illegible] 9[illegible]

The value of the property, I should say, is not less than £ T. 1,5[illegible] and furnishings, it would amount to about £ T. 1,70[illegible].

The Committee have as yet given no definite answers to the proposals made to them. They kindly sent us £ T. 200 although the funds are quite low.

When I took steps to [illegible] refused to do anything while that [illegible] was p[illegible] won the case, but the Court keeps putting off [illegible] property in [illegible] this country or not, that is, he could not tell whether the British Government [illegible] formally approved of the Ottoman land or estate laws. In case it has not, a British subject could not hold land or property in his own name in this country. Perhaps you [illegible] as British subjects are [illegible].

I am going to try to complete our buildings with this £ T. 200 [illegible]. Some of it will have to be used for *true* (relief) direct, but I hope we shall be able to use [illegible]. We have to move the rug department to the upper [illegible] the [illegible] will begin to set up looms on the second floor. Trade is slack just now, but the [illegible] of the "[illegible]" [illegible].

I trust that, with your kind assistance, the rug department also will become an established and profitable industry; so far it has been a dead loss to us. We are giving extra wages to the Kurds, and we are beginning to pay the natives who have [illegible] to weave. In the course of a couple of months we hope to have twenty looms set up in this department. That would mean sixty or seventy weavers, besides as many spinners, wool carders, combers, &c. For the manus we have at present [illegible] looms going, and we intend to set up twenty more as soon as we can, provided our money holds out. [illegible] employment to about fifty [illegible] persons.

Rugs take a long time to make. By May or June we ought to have eight or ten good rugs ready to send to England. I shall be very glad if they can be disposed of in the way you indicate. The rugs we are making now are really very good, all vegetable dyes, and well woven, designs regular and edges even. A little overseeing has brought about a vast improvement.

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received [illegible])

(No. 150.)

Constantinople, March 29, 1899.

My Lord,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 139 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to transmit copy of a further despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, on [illegible] Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, which seems more [illegible]

reckoned on to support Greek as opposed to Russian influences, would place the majority in any general Council of the Greek Orthodox Church in Russian hands, and would tend to cause the general policy of that Church to be directed in future from St. Petersburgh [illegible] Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 51.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. [illegible].)

Damascus, March 18, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 12 of the 8th instant, reporting the [illegible] of Mgr. Malateos as *locum tenens* of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, I [illegible] to inform your Excellency that the Synod and Electoral Committee [illegible] throne. This act will be submitted to the Porte, and also, probably, to [illegible] objectionable names, should there be any, will be erased from it. It will subsequently be returned to Damascus, when the final election will take [illegible].

I am given to understand, on very good authority, that it is almost certain th[illegible] candidate. He is the senior Bishop in this See, and from the religious and moral point of view, would be an excellent choice, though in the matter of intellectual endowment, he is, I imagine, surpassed by others. Should Mgr. Malateos be elected, it [illegible] faction, and equally so for Russian diplomatic influence, which has strenuously [illegible].

With reference to the appointment of Mgr. Malateos as *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate, I may mention that it was mainly due to the dispatch from the Synod here to Constantinople, of two strongly-worded protests addressed, the one, to the Sultan himself, and the other, to the Grand Vizier and the Minister of Justice and Religion. It would appear that the effect of these protests against foreign (read "Hellenic") interference with [illegible] at this See was [illegible] by the Russian Embassy in Constantinople.

I have &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 51.

Memorandum by Mr. Block.

THE influence of the Œcumenical Patriarch of Constantinople in the direction of the Greek Orthodox Church in the East has been hitherto practically predominant since the division between the Eastern and Western Churches became permanent in A.D. 863. For six centuries the Russian Church was governed by Metropolitans dependent on the Patriarchate of Constantinople, until the Czar Theodore established an independent Patriarchal throne at Moscow. The Russian Emperor is at present the sole Head of the Russian Church, both in a spiritual and a political sense, although ecclesiastical affairs are managed by a Synod; this state of things dates from 1700 (Peter the Great). The Russian Emperor, it is true, assumed the character of Protector of all the Christians belonging to the Greek Communion in the East, but the acknowledgment of a layman like the Emperor as the spiritual Head of the Church [illegible] extremely repugnant to the religious feelings of the Eastern Greeks, and, however, much the Orthodox Slav populations have relied upon Russia to free them from the yoke of Islam, the Greek Patriarchate here, although it has coquetted with Russia from time to time, has ever been desirous of retaining its spiritual independence and its jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters over the other Orthodox communities of this country. In Roumania, Servia, Montenegro, [illegible] of Constantinople [illegible] Greece the creation of a Synod as the chief ecclesiastical authority after the war of independence has much reduced even if not altogether destroyed his influence there.

The Orthodox [illegible] to rely on Turkey more than upon Russia to retain what is left of its ecclesiastical authority in the [illegible] whilst it is [illegible] that the Porte does not see its own interests in combating Russia's last move in Syria, it is natural that the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople should be seriously apprehensive of the results of the loss of the influence he has hitherto enjoyed in the Syrian Patriarchates.

In [illegible] Convocation of the [illegible] Church there would be represented the Patriarch [illegible] Alexandria, [illegible] certain upon [illegible] side [illegible] Russia [illegible] Russia, now [illegible] Carlovitz, and [illegible] have a Russian protégé at Antioch, that Power has an assured majority in the Council, even did she not intend to pursue the same policy with regard to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Russia thus has the majority in the Grand Council, the Patriarchate of [illegible] and the future of the Christian communities of the world lie in the hands of the Russian Czar.

I have heard it said that the first act of the Council would be the abolition of [illegible] under the anathema of the Œcumenical Patriarch [illegible] from time to time by Russian agents, e.g., a year and a half ago. The Bulgarian schism has done its work, and the Russian Government, having [illegible] to create a Bulgarian nation, now wish to pull it down [illegible] to carry on their national propaganda in Macedonia under the guise of the Orthodox Church, of which Russia will be [illegible] partner and supreme arbiter. The Œcumenical Patriarchate and its Bishops are at present a bar to Bulgarian [illegible] religious [illegible] Macedonia, and fear that by a change the Bulgarian nationality will profit at the expense of the Greeks; if, however, a majority of the Grand Council decide for the abolition of the schism, the Patriarchate is powerless to prevent it. Bulgaria would, [illegible] Council would [illegible] bidding.

I hear that the Porte, whilst desirous that the Greek community of Antioch should have their independence in the election of the Patriarch, is now beginning to see the real objects in Russia's intervention. It is interesting to note that the Metropolitan of Cyprus is dependent upon the Patriarch of Antioch.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK

Constantinople, March 27, 1899.

No. 52.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 5.)

(No. 155.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March 30, 1899.*

FROM the inclosed copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum it will be seen that great distress prevails in that vilayet, and that aid in money for the purchase of seed corn is very urgently required if famine is to be averted. Colonel Massy states that the relief fund at his disposal has shrunk to 50*l.*, besides 200*l.* lying to his credit at Constantinople. These sums are quite inadequate to meet the emergency, and Colonel Massy appeals for further remittances. With 500*l.* in hand the seed distribution could be started immediately.

I also inclose copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van. The condition of this vilayet appears to be more promising than that of Erzeroum, and considerable sums have been allotted by Government for the relief of the more needy villages.

Captain Maunsell states, however, that further relief is urgently needed, and the 500*l.* which your Lordship has enabled me (by your telegram No. 46 of the 28th instant) to transmit to him will doubtless afford very welcome assistance. But a perusal of the inclosed despatches produces the impression that funds are still more needed at Erzeroum than at Van, and I trust that I may be authorized to remit, without delay, to Colonel Massy the few hundred pounds he requires for seed distribution, should the funds at the disposal of the Relief Committee permit. If no money is available for this purpose, I would suggest that Captain Maunsell be instructed to remit a portion of the 500*l.* assigned to him to his colleague at Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 52.

Acting Consul Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 14.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, March 18, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose a statement showing [illegible] expenditure [illegible] date.

It will be seen that the balance in hand is small, in fact so small in comparison with the great want still prevailing, that we hesitate to commence [illegible] for spring sowings must be forthcoming, if it is desired to avoid certain famine next winter. Already many applications are being made to me from the Christian villages.

The Rev. [illegible] N. Chambers, of the Erzeroum Mission, has just returned from a six weeks' tour in this province. The picture drawn by him of the state of all places visited is, indeed, a distressing one for us whose work lies in these parts. He assures me that [illegible] even immediately after the massacres. [illegible] bordering on starvation prevails. I understand that in [illegible] the Kurds prevail, the state is even worse, these brigands taking the last atom which is left by the tax collector. In many places, the militia [illegible] already levied, when the order came for its [illegible] brutalities and injustice, the tax [illegible] on the individual, those having little means being forced to pay for those who have none. The short-sighted, ignorant policy of the [illegible] Christian population must end in disaster, as the Kurds practically pay nothing, and thus the local exchequer presents a minus quantity during the greater part of the year.

The poverty [illegible] population, that we still hesitate to give out the few pounds left in our hands. Unless some further aid be soon forthcoming [illegible]. Had we now a few hundred pounds wherewith to provide seed, this would be averted, and the whole state of these unhappy people would improve.

We shall be asked for some guarantee that the tax collector and Kurd will not relieve the people of all we distribute. My three years' continual experience in relief duties tells me that no such guarantee is possible if relief is distributed by native agents, but if such distributions are made by Consuls, personally, or by other European agents [illegible] influence, there is no fear that any part of it will be taken. The reasons are apparent. The native agent commands no respect; first the village police must have their share from him, then the head of the village, generally a Moslem, must be satisfied. The agent's family, if not in actual need, is large, all his relatives must get something, this is only fair, and [illegible] ly in the agent's debt, and he must pay himself [illegible] what remains of our funds, but this, even, is unfairly done, as the native agent is never quite unbiased. Eventually the [illegible] fear or feeling of respect for the Armenian agent, appear for their share, which consists generally of all they can lay hands on in the village. Had the funds been [illegible] Europeans the whole amount would have reached the needy, while the Kurd and tax collector [illegible] of what we had given. At least, [illegible] Not one penny of our funds was touched.

The local authorities know well that you are on the watch, and that you know exactly what has been given out and, in fear of the consequences, they will not allow it to be touched. At the same time, while thus travelling to distribute, opportunity is given for personal acquaintance with local officials whose conduct is very often influenced by the knowledge that a foreign Consul is reporting well or badly of them. For every reason, therefore, it appears to me to be a necessary condition that our distributions be made, as far as possible, directly, and not through, local agents, and on this condition being possible I would beg your Excellency to be so very kind as to represent the great necessity in which we stand here of some few hundred pounds. It will be seen that the sum asked for is comparatively small. We have about 50*l.* now in hand, 200*l.* credit at Constantinople, for which I am about to draw upon Sir William Whittall. Had we as much more, or a total of 500*l.*, we would be in a position to at once start seed distribution to be put in on the melting of the snow in two or three weeks.

In the matter of personal travelling I am ever ready to carry out your Excellency's orders, at personal convenience, should my opinion be shared as to the good which results from such journeys.

I cannot close this despatch without expressing my regret that no relief handicrafts of any importance [illegible] considerable assistance towards our funds. [illegible] the [illegible] population [illegible] been required for actual [illegible] possible in this direction, especially [illegible] lation to remain inactive [illegible] erable time to handicrafts if once taught.

I am now devoting myself to this question, hoping that I may be able to overcome local difficulties by degrees.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

[illegible] 2 in No. 52.

Memorandum of Expenditure of the Armenian Relief Committee from April 6, 1898, to [illegible] 1899.

[illegible]	£T.
	25·71
July—Village of Khoshi	[illegible]
August—Village of Baibourt ..	79·75
April and May—Village of Passen	41·62
May—Village of Klanoos ..	18·47
April and December—Sundry poor	[illegible]
[illegible]—Erzeroum—Manoussa work (native [illegible]) ..	[illegible]
	[illegible]
[illegible]	
	[illegible]
Expenditures—December 1895 to April 1898	[illegible]
[illegible] 1899 [illegible] ..	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Credits in hand 18th March, 1899 (about)	31·27
Credits received to 18th March, 1899	15,626·[illegible]

[illegible] further credit to our account of £T. 200 which will be [illegible] 250*l.* in hand.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

[illegible], March 19, 1899.

Inclosure 3 in No. 52.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Van, March 13, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the general state of security of this vilayet has been most satisfactory during the past four months, and not a single outrage has been committed on the Christian population.

This is of course in a great measure due to the deep snows of winter, which prevent lifting of cattle, and general movement of the population.

But still there is no doubt that the feeling between Christians and Moslems has considerably improved, especially in Van town; and it is only the advent of revolutionary Armenian bands that will be likely to destroy this good feeling.

I can hear of no revolutionaries now at Salmas in Persia, and from what I am told by the Vali and other officials, the Turkish Government has arranged, by bribing the Persian officials, to insure early information of and suppression of any bands making their appearance there.

Letters arrive, however, from revolutionary committees in Tiflis, and I am afraid from that quarter, there is some danger of descents being made into this country.

Incidentally these letters mention that the Russians are collecting troops and stores at Tiflis preparatory to a spring campaign, but so far I have been unable to obtain [illegible] ours.

The distribution of relief is progressing favourably, and beyond three or four deaths from starvation some six weeks ago, no others have since occurred.

Further relief, however, is urgently needed, as the prospects of harvest are still a long way off.

The Government have allotted a sum of 2,000*l.* to this vilayet for the distribution of seed to villages in need of relief, and a Mixed Commission has been appointed to superintend the distribution.

The Vali asked my advice and assistance, and I have promised to assist him with any information I possess or can gather.

Money has also arrived from other vilayets for the payment and maintenance of the troops here.

Until the arrival of this money the Government were in great straits to obtain wheat for the soldiers, and were obliged even to borrow a small amount of wheat from our relief fund store to feed the men.

Wheat has now been purchased from Hussein Pasha's store, and has been brought in here.

This has reduced the price of bread so far, 10 paras an oke.

From the fact that the Government always go to Hussein Pasha for purchases of wheat, I think there must be truth in the rumour that this store was not hoarded entirely for his private benefit, but by order of Zekki Pasha to act as a granary in the event of a campaign this spring. Although outside this vilayet, I may mention that the Vali told me yesterday, and I have also heard from other sources, that things were not going well at Bitlis, and that an Armenian had been murdered in the town.

To obtain truth of rumours in this country, however, the only satisfactory method is personal investigation on the spot.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 53.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 5.)

(No. 157.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 29, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora reporting the purchase of transport animals in the Konieh district to the amount of 10,000*l.*, and the departure of recruits from towns in Anatolia with Salonica as their probable destination.

As your Lordship will have seen from Mr. Blunt's despatches to this Embassy of the 20th ultimo and 24th instant, copies of which were sent to the Foreign Office from Salonica, the recruits who have already arrived at that port during the current year for service in Macedonia number upwards of 9,000, and Mr. Blunt's last-mentioned despatch bears testimony to the extensive military preparations now proceeding within his district.

These despatches and information which reaches me from other quarters pointing to military activity throughout the Empire show that the Government are strenuously preparing for possible eventualities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

Sir, *Angora, March* 22, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that 506 recruits of last year's conscription have during the past week left for Ismidt by the following stations on the line, viz., Angora, Malikeui, Palatli, Sarikeui, and Beledjik. From Ismidt the above conscripts it is reported will be sent by sea direct to Salonica to fill up the vacancies caused by the situation created in Macedonia.

I have further the honour to report that I have been informed by Mr. Keun, British Vice-Consul at Konieh, that the military authorities of that vilayet have called up [illegible] variously rumoured to be [illegible] Macedonia or the Yemen—in the latter case to fill up vacancies caused by recent military operations in that district. Mr. Keun further states that purchases of transport animals are being made in his district to the amount of 10,000*l.*

Among [illegible] decided that in case of future mobilization the reserves of this province belonging to the cavalry and artillery shall, as far as possible, be formed into squadrons and batteries at Angora [illegible] officers belonging to the cavalry and artillery from the rank of Captain downwards have been for some little time past in Angora with a view, I am told, of giving effect to the above decision, and more I understand are expected shortly.

I am, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

No. 54.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 5.)

(No. 158.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 30, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that since addressing to your Lordship my despatch No. 111 of the 7th instant, I have again made earnest representations to the Grand Vizier with the twofold object of preventing other Armenian orphanages from being closed, and obtaining permission for the [illegible] Zeitoun, Pallu, Diarbekir, and Chinkush to be reopened.

The Grand Vizier told me yesterday that he was only waiting for a report from the Minister of the Interior, which he expected daily, to see what he could do in the matter. His Highness expressed at the same time his approval of the philanthropic motives that inspired the establishment of such institutions.

I am not without hopes that the four orphanages above mentioned will be eventually reopened, should such be the desire of the Society, and I am glad to be able to report that during the last six weeks no other orphanages have been closed.

I understand that the Pallu and Diarbekir establishments are more or less under the supervision of German missionaries.

I take this opportunity of reporting the cordial and valuable assistance which I have received in this matter from Mr. Oscar Straus, the United States' Minister, and I hope that he will be willing to make a joint representation to the Imperial Government should it turn out that my own representations have not had the desired effect.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 55.

Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 97.)
My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, April* 3, 1899.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 53 of the 6th ultimo, inclosing copy of the letter addressed to your Lordship by the Armenian Relief Committee of London, on the case of Armenian refugees under order of expulsion from Russia, I have the honour to report that while carefully abstaining from saying anything which would give the appearance of an unwarranted interference in a question under discussion between the Russian and Turkish Governments, the question put and answer given on this subject in the House of Commons afforded me an opportunity of asking Count Mouravieff, in the course of private conversation, what was the present position of these unfortunate refugees, and the result of the negotiations reported in the press as having been carried on with the Turkish Government in regard to their repatriation.

Count Mouravieff readily answered that it was clearly impossible to permit the continued residence in the Russian provinces of this large body of foreign refugees, but that their forced repatriation had been suspended until spring, and the Russian Government had meantime been in communication with the Turkish Government, and had secured from it an undertaking that the refugees should be returned in safety to their houses, and protected in them against the Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES S. SCOTT.

No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 161.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 3, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith extracts from the Turkish press, according to which a proposal of the Anatolian Railway Company for the extension of their system has received the approval of the Porte.

The project in question is said to involve the construction of two lines starting from Konieh, the present terminus, or, according to the "Ikdam," from Angora and Konieh respectively, the northern line to run to Erzeroum and Trebizond, and the southern line to extend to Busrah, passing through Adana and the Valley of the Euphrates.

Notwithstanding these reports in the press, I understand that the Minister of Foreign Affairs denies that any project of the kind has been before the Porte for their consideration. It is difficult to understand how the money could be raised for such extensive operations without a high kilometric guarantee being conceded by the Ottoman Government, and, in view of the heavy burden—amounting in bad years to not far short of 1,000,000*l.*—already borne by them in respect of existing lines, it is highly improbable that they will assume fresh responsibilities of this kind.

It may well be, however, that the German Company is securing its prior right to construct these lines, so as to be able to resist their being laid down by rival Companies, such as the one headed by Count Kapnist.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 56.

Extract from the "Ikdam" of April 1, 1899.

(Translation.)

WE gave certain information yesterday about the projected Anatolian line. The Anatolian Railway Company have now asked for the Concession for themselves for the construction of the lines. Their proposals are under the consideration of the Government, and also the plans and projects as to the stations. One line is to run from Angora to Trebizond and Erzeroum, the other from Konia to Adana, the Euphrates Valley, and Busrah.

The time for the construction of each section has been fixed. The trains on the Angora line are to be ready in two years, and on the Konia line in five.

Inclosure 2 in No. 56.

Extract from the "Servet" of March 30, 1899.

LE projet d'un chemin de fer partant de Konieh pour aboutir à Erzeroum et Trébizonde d'un coté, et de l'autre, en passant par Adana et la Vallée de l'Euphrate jusqu'à Bassorah, serait à l'étude.

Un terme de deux ans serait accordé pour le prolongement ou l'embranchement de ces lignes, en même temps que pour le commencement des travaux. En cas de non-exécution de ces clauses, le Gouvernement aurait le droit de saisir tout le matériel en possession de la Société et le cautionnement de £ T. 10,000 à déposer à la Banque reviendrait au Trésor Impérial.

Inclosure 3 in No. 56.

Extract from the "Servet" of March 30, 1899.

RENSEIGNEMENTS complémentaires sur le projet de chemin de fer dont nous avons parlé hier, et concernant deux lignes partant de Konieh et aboutissant : l'une à Trébizonde et Erzeroum, et l'autre à Bassorah. La Société des Chemins de Fer d'Anatolie se porte concurrente pour l'obtention de la nouvelle Concession.

Les propositions soumises au Gouvernement Impérial ont été approuvées par le Département compétent, de sorte que les plans du tracé, de même que les rapports topographiques financier, seraient en voie de préparation.

No. 57.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 164. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 6, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum respecting military matters in his district.

Colonel Massy reports that rumours are current that the reserves are to be called out at Sivas and to be sent to Macedonia. He hears, also, on good authority, that Zekki Pasha, the General of the 4th Army Corps, is about to raise a force of mountain infantry in all the mountainous districts of Kurdistan, on the same principle as that now being raised in Dersim (see Colonel Ponsonby's Report, No. 12, which accompanied my despatch No. 152 of the 29th ultimo).

As your Lordship will observe, Colonel Massy refers to the doubts entertained of Zekki Pasha's loyalty, and adds that his own observation leads him to believe that many of the senior and Staff Officers of the 4th Army Corps are disloyal to the Turkish Government.

According to Colonel Massy Zekki Pasha is suspected by many of harbouring the intention of some day setting himself up as an independent ruler, and it is thought by some that he would court Russia's aid in this undertaking. These suspicions appear to be based on pure conjecture.

The question of Zekki Pasha's loyalty has already formed the subject of various despatches from this Embassy, and in particular I would refer your Lordship to my predecessor's despatch No. 328 of the 16th December, 1897, forwarding a Report from Captain Maunsell of an interview with Zekki Pasha.

The sinister designs attributed to that General have evidently so far found no credence at Yildiz, where he is apparently still in the highest favour and thoroughly trusted by the Sultan.

In his Report above mentioned Captain Maunsell says: "I am convinced that Zekki Pasha's intention is to hamper the Kurds as much as possible in order to make the Kurdish Hamidieh organization as perfect as possible in view of war in the near future with Russia.

"He is a very determined man backed by Palace influence, and intends to carry through this policy regardless of all obstacles. . . . I do not think there is any truth in the report that he intends to set himself up as an independent Prince in Kurdistan, as he has neither the capacity nor the immediate following for such an enterprise. I made careful inquiries at several points, but could find no confirmation of the rumours."

Colonel Massy reports the opening of the Tiflis–Kars Railway as far as Alexandropol on the 17th February last, and he understands that the whole line will be ready in May next, and that before very long it will be extended towards the Turkish frontier to Sara Kumush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 57.

Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, March* 20, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to give your Excellency the following items of information on military matters.

I have it on good authority that it is Zekki Pasha's desire and intention to raise a force of mountain Hamidieh infantry, on the same principle as that now being levied in the Dersim, as soon as this force is organized, in all other mountainous districts of Kurdistan where it is impossible to raise a force of cavalry. This is noteworthy when it is considered that many suspect Zekki Pasha of harbouring the intention of some day setting himself up as an independent Ruler in these parts. It is thought by some that he would court Russia's aid in this daring undertaking, and it is also said that both Zekki Pasha and the principal Kurdish Chiefs are already bound to Russia. This is mere conjecture, however, the exact truth of which it is practically impossible to discover at present.

There are various rumours current as to the calling out of reserves and as to measures to increase the army. It is said here that the reserves at Sivas are to be called out and sent to Macedonia.

There is another report that some 200 battalions are to be formed by the calling to the colours of all men now exempt for such reasons as being only sons in families dependent on them for support and other privileges. This, again, although I have it from a military source, may be only rumour. I mention these matters in case they may serve as confirming information from other sources.

A German cavalry officer is expected to arrive at Erzinjian shortly, to be attached to the 4th Army Corps, in connection with the training of the regulars and Hamidieh cavalry. I was informed of this by the Ferik, Mehmet Ali Pasha, commanding the troops here and on the Russian frontier. He added that such measures were of no use. The troops required drill and musketry practice, but, he added, "The present Sultan does not let us do this, he does not want it, so what are we to do?" This outspoken manner of putting things is one to which one is not accustomed and from the Commander of the troops defending the Russian frontier these words are significant. My own observation leads me to believe that many of the senior and Staff Officers of the 4th Army Corps are disloyal to the present Government, while it is well known that many of them are sent here as a practical banishment from the capital. Zekki Pasha himself has not been allowed to leave since he commands this corps, and it is said that he can never return to Constantinople again.

The Military Attaché at the Russian Consulate-General is going to bring carrier pigeons from Kars and establish a station here. The Ferik is said to be on the point of getting some carrier pigeons also.

The Tiflis–Kars Railway was opened to traffic on the 17th February as far as Alexandropol. The ironwork of the bridges and the rails are now being laid towards Kars, to which place the line is to be opened in May, it is said.

The officer acting as Russian Military Attaché here is my informant. This line will, in all probability, be continued towards the Turkish frontier, to Sara Kamush, before very long. The Military Attaché here, Colonel Prjevalasky, is to be made Chief of the Staff of the trans-Caucasian army in the autumn. He is a man who knows all this country well and who knows everything connected with this army through Turkish officers who spy on their own country for him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 166.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, April 6, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 158 of the 30th ultimo and to previous communications on the same subject, I have now the satisfaction of reporting to your Lordship that the Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me, as the result of my repeated and persistent representations, that orders have been sent to the local authorities to allow the Armenian orphanages at Palu, Chinkush, and Diarbekir to be reopened. It appears that the orphanage at Zeitoun has not, as reported, been closed. I am assured by his Excellency, at the same time, that the other orphanages will not be interfered with.

In connection with this matter I may state that the Catholic Armenian Patriarch, Mgr. Azarian, has been twice to see me, and expressed his great surprise at seeing a statement in the English papers that he had urged the Turkish Government to close the orphanages. His Beatitude denied most positively that he had taken any action of the kind attributed to him, or that he was wanting in sympathy with the humanitarian aims of those who were supporting these establishments.

The inclosed Encyclical letter of the Gregorian Patriarch, while expressing his Beatitude's gratitude for the charitable assistance received from foreigners, comments upon the efforts made to convert his flock to Catholicism, and shows, I fear, that the relations between the two high Dignitaries of the Armenian Church are not altogether satisfactory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 58.

Substance of Encyclical Letter of Mgr. Ormanian, Armenian Patriarch.

THE duties incumbent on our office of Patriarch compel us to take a lively interest in all matters referring to our beloved community, above all to watch over it, to comfort and heal it in trouble, provide for its wants, and try to alleviate its sufferings. Besides this, we must endeavour to lessen and simplify our wants before His Majesty the Sultan, to call the attention of the Government to questions that must be solved and to enlist the sympathy of generous people and get pecuniary help to distribute to the necessitous and starving.

We must also look to the building of churches and keep them up as far as we can, increase the number of schools and spread education, as well as strive for the introduction of internal reforms.

Our most sacred duty, however, touches our very religion and Church itself. Lately we have heard with sorrow that, under the burden of their misery, certain of our community have been persuaded to leave their Church under promises of an amelioration of their condition.

Does infidelity bring happiness? Never. Does Heaven's blessing fall on a man who denies his mother Church? Suffering is nothing new for us. The Armenian people have received with gratitude help, pecuniary and other, from all nations. No, the Sultan does not make it a condition of his protection that men should change their religion.

The Sultan has ordered that Armenians should remain faithful to their Church and nation. Our Christian benefactors have never made such a condition, and those who preach the contrary are not the true interpreters of the wishes of the benefactors of the people. Don't believe them. Our real benefactors will be certain to help us if we remain faithful to our creed and refuse to be bribed to change it. I refer to my writings to point out to you the deplorable condition of our brothers. We have provided for them for some years out of donations received, we have fed the hungry, and have built orphanages. Humanity bids us to continue in this way as long as misery exists.

If men of other religions show such generosity, how much more should the rich and professional men among us work for the good of their distressed brethren. Love your Church and your brothers and help them. How shall we describe those who, belonging to a branch of the same religion, try to sow the germs of Catholicism in the hearts of our brothers, pretending that there is no difference between their Church and ours? If so, why try and convert us to theirs? We have kept our rites intact, have modified nothing, but have preserved the traditions of our fathers, and we can only complain of those who have dared to correct the words of our Holy Fathers and to change the precepts of the Church. They wish for a united Church; let them remember that ours was a united Church founded in Jesus Christ.

[illegible] relations with other Churches, and how glorious a religion ours is. I beg you to remain steadfast in this faith, founded by our St. Gregory, always a consolation for our troubles and resting under the aegis of the Sultan. And I invite Archbishops and Bishops, priests and Vicars, and Heads of Convents to help to keep the weak in the right path, and preach the truth to them, and persuade those who have strayed from the mother Church to return, and to preserve the foundations of the Apostolic Church laid by St. Bartholomew and confirmed by St. Gregory the Illuminator and preached by his de[illegible]

[illegible]

No. 59.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. [illegible])
Sir,
Foreign Office, April 15, 1899.

I HAVE [illegible] reporting that you had been informed by Tewfik Pasha that, as a result of your repeated representations, orders had been sent to the local authorities to allow the Armenian Orphanages at Palu, Chinkush, and Diarbekir to be reop[illegible].

I have received with satisfaction the report of the successful result of your Excellency's efforts in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 6[illegible].

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 17.)

(No. 16[illegible].)
My Lord,
Constantinople, April 10, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the repatriation of certain Nestorian Christians, amounting to about 500 families, who, as reported by Major Williams on the 15th September, 1896 (see Sir P. Currie's despatch No. 785 of the 30th September in that year), left their homes on the plain of Gavvar and the neighbouring villages on the murder of their Bishop by Sheikh Sadi[illegible], and took refuge across the Persian frontier.

Captain Maunsell learns from the Rev. O. H. Parry, head of the English Mission at Urmia, that these refugees, owing to their present destitute condition, intend to recross the frontier in the spring, and Mr. Parry asks that some guarantee for their safety may be obtained from the Porte.

Captain Maunsell states that he does not think there is any likelihood of their suffering inconvenience owing to the apparent desire of the Government to conciliate the Nestorians. He has spoken on the subject to the Vali, who has promised to

[illegible]

make all necessary preparations in case of the return of the refugees, and has assured Captain Maunsell that they have nothing to fear from the Kurds, and that there is no need to refer the matter to Constantinople.

Assuming that Captain Maunsell's representations were made unofficially, I have approved his action in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 60.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.)
Sir,
Van, March 20, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received a letter (dated the 5th February, and received here the 13th March, 1899) from the Rev. O. H. Parry, head of the English [illegible] repatriation of [illegible] of Nestorians who fled from this vilayet in the autumn of 1896, and who temporarily settled in Persia, but who now wish to return to their homes on this side of the frontier.

These persons fled from the plain of Gavvar and a group of some ten villages round Marbishu and Ival to the plain of Tergavvar, in Persia, on the murder of their Bishop by Sheikh Sadik (mentioned in Major Williams' despatch No. 28 of the [illegible] worse every year, and they intend making great efforts to return to Turkey this [illegible].

Mr. Parry does not state the exact numbers, but says "the great exodus took place in 1896"; he mentions also that the Mission now advises them not to return without a guarantee from the Turkish Government for their safety from the Kurds if they return.

He requests me to forward the matter to your Excellency, hoping that by this means some guarantee [illegible] Government [illegible] Constantinople; and he also asks me to personally interest myself with the Vali, as the matter refers to this vilayet.

He also states that so destitute have these people now become, that, with or without guarantee [illegible] this spring.

I have seen the Vali on the subject to-day, and he at once promised to make all necessary preparations in case of the arrival of these people. He assures me they have nothing to fear from Sheikh Sadik, or the Kurds of that region.

He will write at once to the Mutessarif of Bashkala giving him instructions, and will send a special officer to the district in question to arrange matters.

I do not think there is any likelihood of these people suffering inconvenience as it seems to be now the intention of the Government to treat the Nestorians well in order to prevent their becoming discontented and joining the Orthodox Church.

The Vali states that there will be no necessity for him to refer the matter to Constantinople as the people formerly belonged to this Vilayet, and the question of their return can, therefore, be settled here.

I should think that the total number of persons likely to return will number 500 families.

I trust I have your Excellency's approval in this matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 61.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 17.)

(No. 170.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, April 12, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the removal to Russia of three Armenian revolutionists who have been kept at the Russian Vice-Consulate at Van as prisoners since August 1897.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 61.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 13.)
Sir,
Van, March 20, 1899.

I HAVE [illegible] named Feromoz, and the others Arshag and Vartan, who have been kept as prisoners in the Russian Vice-Consulate here since August 1897, have now left under escort for Russia.

These men were concerned in the revolutionary attack made at that time on [illegible] from the prison [illegible].

An officer's guard has been kept on the Russian Consulate since that time.

They left two days ago with the escort and a cavass from the Russian Consulate for the frontier at Igdir.

[illegible] authorities, as the Russian Consul insisted on their going to the Armenian church here under escort.

[illegible] opportunity of declaiming to his compatriots.

Also he has been able to send letters outside, as not long ago he forwarded me eight closely-written pages of the wrongs of Armenia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 62.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 17.)

(No. 176.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, April 13, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, reporting the arrest at Ak Dagh Maden by the Kaïmakam of the district of certain leading members of a sect established in that town known as the "Stavriotes."

The exact status of this small sect (according to Mr. Shipley it does not number more than 150 families) would appear to be somewhat peculiar. Until thirty or forty years ago they seem, while adhering in secret to the Christian faith, to have conformed outwardly to the Mussulman religion. At that time they ceased to attend the mosque, and have since been recognized as forming part of the Orthodox Church.

Until the incidents now reported by Mr. Shipley they have been left unmolested by the local authorities in the free exercise of their religion, but the circumstances now described seem to point to the conclusion that a systematic persecution has been resolved upon in Constantinople.

The proceedings of the Kaïmakam had already been brought to my notice by Archbishop Tanbalides, the Chief of the Offices of the Œcumenical Patriarchate at the Phanar, who called at the Embassy some days ago and handed to me a statement charging the Kaïmakam with religious persecution on a large scale.

I instructed Mr. Shipley to inquire into these charges and report to me. As his despatch now inclosed, which [illegible] substantially confirms the Archbishop's statement, I have caused Mr. Block to mention the matter unofficially to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Tewfik Pasha professed to know nothing of the persecution reported, but promised to make inquiries.

I understand that the Russian [illegible] also approached the Porte on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 62.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10. Confidential.)

Angora, March 30, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the arrest at Ak Dagh Maden in the night of the 19th instant, and subsequent conveyance to Angora under escort, of [illegible] town known as "Stavrites," under circumstances which [illegible] go, point strongly to the supposition that a religious persecution of that sect has been [illegible]

[illegible] are as follows:—

Ak Dagh Maden, the chief town of the Kaïmakamlik of that name, contains some 1,200 houses, of which 700 belong to the Greek orthodox community, properly so called, 200 to the Mussulmans, [illegible] to the Stavrites. The history of these latter, who thus number some 700 or 800 souls, is a somewhat peculiar one.

They are in reality Lazes, and would appear to have made their way to Ak Dagh Maden in the early part of the present century. Up to some thirty or forty years ago these Stavrites would seem, outwardly at least, to have so far [illegible] Mussulman [illegible] being Mussulman names on their children, besides performing [illegible] all the time [illegible] continued to exist, I am told, until [illegible] Firman was obtained from the Sublime Porte which, however, has never come into their actual possession [illegible] and permitting them [illegible] the free and open [illegible] liberty, however, to [illegible] service being maintained as heretofore. The existence of this Firman is, perhaps, open to doubt, but however this may be, it is asserted by those Christians who are acquainted with Ak Dagh Maden that since the year above mentioned not only have these Stavrites ceased to go to Mosque, but have intermarried with the original orthodox Greek inhabitants of that town. Moreover, it would appear that for the past twelve or fifteen years the children of these Stavrites have practically ceased to be inscribed on the Turkish Census lists owing to the fact that the Turkish authorities refuse to accept them under any other than Mussulman [illegible] the Stavrites as steadily refuse to give. Up to quite recently [illegible] to have been no particular [illegible] between the [illegible] five years successive Kaïmakams [illegible] members of the [illegible] Islamism would [illegible] pressure to that [illegible] a month ago, however, matters between the Stavrites and the Government [illegible] appear to have been brought to a direct issue in the following manner:—

One of these Stavrites, named Ibrahim, [illegible] his daughter in marriage to a Greek named Yani, of Boghluk, a village in the vicinity of Ak Dagh Maden. Under pretext, however, that the girl had been compelled to enter into the marriage without her consent, the newly-married couple were brought to Ak Dagh Maden under escort, and, although the result of the inquiry was to show that the marriage in question had taken place in due and proper form with the full consent of all the parties concerned, and notwithstanding the protestations of Ibrahim, who declared that he was a Christian and not a Mussulman, the girl had not been allowed

to return to her husband, but has been placed in a Mussulman house where, however, she is well treated, and allowed to see her father every day.

Shortly after this occurred the arrest of Mahmoud and Mustafa Beys, otherwise known as Hadji Isaak and Nicholas respectively, as above reported and from the account which has been given to me of the matter, it would appear as if it had been deliberately prepared beforehand by the Ottoman authorities. The new Kaïmakam of Ak Dagh Maden had only that day arrived in the town to take up his post, and had been met according to custom by the Chief Notables of the district, including Mahmoud and Mustafa Beys. The latter in the evening were invited by the Kaïmakam to the konak, and under one pretext or another were detained there until midnight, when, without being allowed to communicate with their friends, they were placed in a carriage and hurried off under escort to Yuzgat, the only reason vouchsafed to them being that it was by the orders of the Mutessarif of the last-mentioned town.

Still more energetic measures, however, were to come, for the arrest of the two Notables above referred to [illegible] followed [illegible] afterwards by that of four more leading members of the Stavrite community, viz., Hussein Effendi, Dervish Effendi, Pir Agha, and Veli Chaoush, whose Christian names are Eustathius, Lazarus, Sava, and George respectively, for no other motive, according to my informant, than that [illegible] notwithstanding [illegible] persistently asserting their adherence to the Christian religion. Moreover, at a Council which was held at the konak the day following the arrest of Mahmoud and Mustafa Beys and to which the Priest Kyrillos, the representative of Mgr. Gervasius, the Greek Metropolitan of Gumushkhane, in which diocese Ak Dagh Maden is situated, was summoned, the latter on being ordered by the Kaïmakam to cease his ministrations to these Stavrites is said to have replied that he could not do so. They were Christians, and as such had a right to his services. He himself had given his own sister in marriage to the Pir Agha (Sava) above referred to, and on those of the Turkish Notables who were present being appealed to by him to say whether these facts were not as he had stated [illegible] reply in the affirmative [illegible] that it would be his duty to submit the matter to his hierarchical superiors.

Such for the moment would appear to be the situation at Ak Dagh Maden. As regards Mahmoud and Mustafa Beys they were, on their arrival at Angora, placed in close confinement, but managed, nevertheless, to convey a communication to the Priest Joannes, the temporary representative of the Patriarchate in this town, who on inquiring in that capacity of the Governor-General Tewfik Pasha why these persons had been arrested was merely told, in reply, that it had been done under direct orders from the Ministry of the Interior. This reply of the Vali has, I understand, been duly communicated by the Priest Joannes to the Patriarchate at Constantinople. I should add that the intervention of both my French colleague, M. Pons, and myself was requested by the Greek community upon whom these events had made no little impression, but this, under the circumstances, was considered by us as inadvisable. In view, however, of the secrecy with which the whole affair had been conducted by the Turkish authorities, and in view of the apprehensions for their personal safety which [illegible] expressed by the prisoners themselves, my French colleague decided upon sending his Dragoman to the Governor-General to appeal to the latter's humanity that they should be well treated, a step in which I concurred, requesting the Dragoman at the same time to add my own appeal to that of M. Pons. His Excellency was good enough to assure us, in reply, that no harm should be done to them while in his charge, and I have since learned that at Tchorba, to which place in the vilayet it appears they have been sent, they are being well treated.

If, as is generally believed by the Angora Greek community, the object of the Turkish Government in dealing thus with the leaders of the Stavrites is to intimidate the others with a view of their being compelled, in order to avoid similar persecution, to become converted to Islamism, the affair is likely to result in serious trouble, for although I am not acquainted with the town in question, which is situated at some seven days' distance from Angora, and have consequently had to depend upon outside sources for my information, the statements which have been made to me by all those who have visited Ak Dagh Maden absolutely agree in one point, viz., the free and open exercise by these Stavrites of the Christian religion for many years past.

Moreover, if intermarriage between these Stavrites and the Greek orthodox community, which, [illegible] place, to the extent which my informants assert—and this is a fact the truth of which could easily be elicited by independent inquiry—it is hardly possible to believe, in view of the great confusion which would result, that the Turkish authorities can be seriously entertaining the projects of wholesale conversion with which they are accredited. I need only mention to your Excellency as an instance, that Mustafa Bey himself, whom the authorities are now claiming as a Mussulman, has given his daughter in marriage to a certain Michail, an Orthodox Greek, of Ak Dagh Maden, who has left for Constantinople to lay his father-in-law's case before the Patriarchate, and with whom, [illegible] through [illegible]. The only [illegible] of this somewhat mysterious affair, which I could suggest, would be that the Turkish authorities [illegible] Christians [illegible] troops in their last campaign in Thessaly; and I might further state that in a confidential conversation which I have had on the subject with his Excellency Tewfik Pasha, no such reason was alleged by the latter.

On the other hand, his Excellency gave [illegible] Constantinople.

[illegible] developments which the affair may take [illegible] I should [illegible] in the whole district, and that it is already being asserted that this fact may not be [illegible] foreign [illegible] the sudden zeal for conversion which, according to the Christian, [illegible] just now [illegible] certain high quarters at Constantinople.

I have, &c.

[illegible]

No. [illegible]

Sir N. [illegible] April 17.)

(No. 177.)

[illegible] 1899.

YOUR Lordship is acquainted with the history of the Damascus–Haiffa Railway Concession which for a period of years has remained dormant owing to the unwillingness or inability of the British Company which had obtained it to proceed with the works.

The agent of the Company was Mr. Pilling, but upon his bankruptcy some few months ago, the Thames Ironworks Company, which had for some time been largely interested in the concern, took the matter in hand, and deputed Mr. Hervey to proceed to Constantinople and Haiffa, with a view to obtaining an extension of the term of the concession and commencing the actual construction of the line.

Mr. Hervey, in conjunction with Mr. Pears, a British lawyer of repute in Constantinople, has had several interviews with the Turkish Minister of Public Works, and he leaves Constantinople to-day under the impression that the difficulties in point of form arising out of the removal of Mr. Pilling, in whose name the previous negotiations had been carried on, would soon be overcome. I have, however, [illegible] it well to let the Sublime Porte know of my interest in the matter, and M. Marinitsch, who saw the Minister of Public Works by my direction, has obtained satisfactory assurances of his goodwill. Mr. Hervey has informed me of the progress of his negotiations, and I am giving him my support.

I have, &c.
(Signed) [illegible]

No. 64.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received April* 17.)

(No. 179.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 13, 1899.

YOUR Lordship is aware that the Sultan has manifested of late a desire to bring about more friendly relations between his Government and that of Her Majesty. In this spirit he recently asked for a list of pending cases in which this Embassy is interested, and which are awaiting solution at the Porte. I accordingly desired Mr. Block to present to the Sultan's First Secretary on the 11th instant the *pro-memorid* and inclosures, a translation of which accompanies this despatch.

I had intended to include among our claims the long-standing demand for indemnification on account of losses sustained by British subjects in connection with the massacres, and the inclosed statement pressing these claims was ready drawn up for presentation with the others.

Mr. Block, however, by my authority, and in compliance with the advice tendered by the First Secretary, withdrew this paper from the list. It seemed undesirable to [illegible] by [illegible] a particular claim with respect to which it was clear that His Imperial Majesty would [illegible] in connection with the others would certainly have caused irritation, and I thought it better to reserve it for separate treatment.

[illegible] without loss of dignity in his own eyes, and I was particularly anxious to obtain his favourable consideration of Messrs. Lynch's request for greater facilities than they at present enjoy for the navigation of the Tigris.

Your Lordship will see that I placed this claim at the head of the list, following it [illegible] claims [illegible] in respect of the steamship [illegible] telegraph to [illegible] Mr. Simmons' property near Constantinople, and the indemnities due to the Rev. Mr. Martin and Mr. Macallum.

Not having received as yet a reply from your Lordship to my telegram No. 19 of the 21st ultimo, inquiring whether I should continue to press for an extension of the Smyrna–Aïdin Railway, I thought it advisable to omit this serious grievance from the list.

I desired Mr. Block, however, to repeat to the Sultan's First Secretary that the treatment which the British Company had received constituted one of the principal grounds of our complaint, that British commercial enterprise had been systematically thwarted for many years past.

Mr. Block has reported his conversation at the Palace in the inclosed Memorandum, from the postscript of which your Lordship will see that there is good reason to hope that some of these claims may be immediately settled, and that the others will receive the Sultan's personal consideration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 64.

Pro-memorid to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan.

(Translation.)

HEREWITH annexed is the list of pending cases before the Grand Vizierate and the Council of Ministers, for the settlement of which the Iradé of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan is urgently requested. Besides these there are affairs in which the Embassy is interested, which are under the consideration of the competent Departments. Should their settlement be delayed, or the competent Departments be unable to deal with them, the Ambassador reserves to himself the right to submit them later to His Imperial Majesty, in order [illegible] solution thereof.

1. *Tigris Barges.*

It is natural that all possible facilities should be granted to Messrs. Lynch in running the steamers they are entitled to use on the Tigris, in virtue of the Imperial Firman they hold, in view of the extension and importance acquired by the commercial transactions of those parts. Yet, though permission has been frequently requested for the Company to use barges, the Imperial Government has not acceded to this demand. The Company's commercial operations have consequently been much impeded. As the Government must obviously appreciate the services rendered by the Company to the trade of those parts, it is requested that a favourable reply may be given to the request that the Company may be allowed the temporary use of barges when the river is low, in order to render possible the transport of the merchandize which has consequently accumulated at Basra.

It is also requested that orders will be given to the local authorities not to allow irrigation canals to be constructed with their mouth to the stream.

2. *Steamship "Euxine."*

Eleven years ago, the English steamer "Euxine" was prevented from navigating between Constantinople and Bartin, though its right to do so was established by Treaty. The owners of the steamer presented a claim for a considerable sum as representing their loss through being obliged to cease trading with Bartin, and, in consequence, to sell their vessel at a heavy loss. In order to facilitate a solution of the matter, Her Majesty's Embassy succeeded in reducing their claim to 2,5[illegible]*l.* 10*s.* it is hoped that this just claim may now be settled.

3. *Telegraph Company.*

By the Firman of the 18th Rejet. 1301, and the annexed Convention, it is provided that should the Imperial Government decide in future to lay any submarine cable, the fact is first to be notified in writing to the Eastern Telegraph Company, who thus possesses a preferential right. Yet a concession for a submarine cable from Constantinople to Kustendje has recently been granted, nor have the foregoing conditions been observed. The foregoing has been communicated in writing to the Porte, with the request that the Company's rights may be taken into account; but no reply having yet been received, it is requested that any decision taken on the subject by the Porte may be communicated to Her Majesty's Embassy.

4. *Mrs. Simmons.*

Her Majesty's Embassy has frequently complained of the encroachments of the neighbouring villagers on the property of Mrs. Simmons at Petinohori during the last twenty-five years, but though Commissions of Inquiry have more than once been sent to the spot, and the matter been investigated by the Tribunals, the encroachments continue, and the representations of Her Majesty's Embassy have been fruitless, so that at the present moment, although the title-deeds of the property are in the possession of Mrs. Simmons, two-thirds of her land is occupied by the invaders.

In order to put a stop to this state of things, the Porte had last year submitted to the Palace the necessity of the land in question being purchased by the Imperial Government, and Her Majesty's Embassy begs to state that it is ready to accept for the farm in question a fair price, to be based on the value of the land, and a proper compensation for the damage so far suffered by Mrs. Simmons.

5. *Rev. Mr. Martin.*

An English missionary, by name Mr. Martin, was, while travelling through a place called Kishé, asked for his passport by a zaptieh. He was allowed to continue his journey, but his passport was subsequently taken from him and he was stopped, while his effects, instead of going on to his destination, Tashja, were sent to Kishé. Mr. Martin was conducted to Tashja, but not allowed to remain there, and sent back to Kishé, whence he was taken to Bagchejik. His passport having, as previously explained, been taken from him, he was considered as having none, and kept in prison for one night. Thence he was sent to Tekke, where he was also detained for one night. For this improper treatment by the local authorities a sum of 50*l.* was demanded as indemnity, and it is requested that orders may be given for the payment of this sum.

6. *Rev. Mr. Macallum.*

Two years ago Dr. Macallum, a British subject, proceeded to Marash for the purpose of distributing relief at Zeitoun, with the permission of the local authorities. On arrival at Alabash he was informed that by order of the Mutessarif of Marash he was to return to Marash, and be expelled from the country, in obedience to orders from the Sublime Porte. Two days later he was conducted under escort to Aleppo, where, upon the representations of Her Majesty's Embassy, he was handed over to the British Consul. For this improper treatment an indemnity of 100*l.* was demanded by Her Majesty's Embassy, and it is requested that this sum may be paid.

Inclosure 2 in No. 64.

Memorandum respecting the Massacre Claims.

THE Imperial Government has not yet acceded to the demand for pecuniary compensation in favour of the British subjects who suffered loss in the recent disturbances, though claims for damage sustained in similar disturbances have before now been paid by the United States' Government to China, by France to Italy, and by England to France; it would therefore be in accord with the principles of international law and the well-known sentiments of justice of the Imperial Government to follow these precedents, and it is therefore requested that the claims of British merchants and subjects for the losses thus sustained by them may be met

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Inclosure 3 in No. 64.

Memorandum by Mr. Block.

THE Sultan having on two occasions asked for a list of pending cases in which this Embassy is interested, and which are awaiting solution at the Porte, acting under your Excellency's instructions, I [illegible] a short Memorandum to the Sultan's First Secretary on the 11th instant. Herewith inclosed is the translation of the documents I presented

I stated to the First Secretary that there was another matter which was not included in this list, but which was of considerable importance, seeing that the injustice committed by the Turkish Government [illegible] had produced the very worst effect and impression in British commercial and financial circles. This was the reiterated demand of the Smyrna–Aïdin Railway Company for its legitimate extension to Chai. I repeated all the arguments that have so often been laid before the Porte and submitted to the Sultan, which unfortunately have been received with a deaf ear, and I said that this was one of those cases which your Excellency reserved to yourself to submit again to His Majesty "en temps et lieu."

The First Secretary then asked me to withdraw from the list the question of the indemnities due to British subjects for losses during the Armenian massacres.

I said at first that I could do no such thing. I had your Excellency's instructions which I must carry out, and I explained why your Excellency desired to lay the matter before the Sultan personally. That British subjects had suffered was an undeniable fact, and some of the sufferers were in absolute want; the money would have eventually to be paid, and it was better to settle the question now than allow it to drag on. The Armenian question was dormant, but until this money was paid, reference would perpetually be made to the [illegible]. If the claims were paid, the public would cease to refer to them. Other nations had paid money under similar circumstances, and the fact of indemnifying the sufferers did not imply responsibility; it would be an act of generosity towards persons who had incurred losses through no fault of their own, and many examples of such generosity on the part of the Sultan were extant to those who had suffered by earthquake, famine, or fire. The sufferers on this occasion were "misafirs" or guests and strangers in the land, and the Sultan had always encouraged foreigners engaged in trade in his capital and elsewhere.

The First Secretary said that all these arguments are very well in their way, but his advice was not to take the matter before the Sultan at present. His Majesty would infallibly reply that the Porte had invariably refused all the Embassies to be responsible for such losses. The Sultan had, on his own initiative, asked for a list of such cases as were capable of solution, and this case would not be now settled; it would only annoy the Sultan to have it laid before him in this manner; it would not be advisable at a moment when the Sultan desired to be agreeable to submit a matter which would only irritate him, without producing any result. The Ambassador could always continue to press the question at the Porte, and as a last resource could appeal to the Sultan; he was at liberty to do so at any time, but, in his opinion, to bring the matter forward in this manner or to discuss the matter with the Sultan would be at present most impolitic and out of season.

I therefore used my discretion, and said that I would withdraw it subject to your further instructions, but I added that in any case the matter would have to be brought forward on another occasion.

(Signed) A. BLOCK.

P.S.—I have since learned from the First Secretary that the Sultan has given orders for the claims of Macallum and Martin to be paid, and for the purchase of Mrs. Simmons' farm by the Civil List. With regard to the other matters, the Sultan has asked for information from the Porte.

A. B.

No. 65.

N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 17.)

(No. 170.)

Constantinople, April 13, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 139 and 150 of the 22nd and 29th ultimo respectively, with regard to Russian propaganda in Syria and the approaching election of a new Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, I learn that the Porte has informed Nazim Pasha that the Sultan will not recognize a Patriarch of that province who is not approved by the other Patriarches.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 66.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 183.)

Constantinople, April 15, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 155 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the relief work in his district.

Captain Maunsell reports a marked improvement in the situation. The snows having partially melted, grain is coming in from the less destitute centres, and there has been a further considerable fall in the price of wheat.

Since the date of Captain Maunsell's despatch, nearly 800*l.* have been sent to him. He should therefore have amply sufficient funds at his disposal for his requirements.

I have telegraphed to Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum for any suggestions he may have to make as to the proportions in which the sum of 600*l.*, which, as I learned from your Lordship's telegram No. 19 of the 13th instant, has been granted by the Armenian Relief Committee for Van, Bitlis, and Erzeroum, should be distributed among the three districts, bearing in mind the sums already sent to Van, and the improvement reported by Captain Maunsell.

In the concluding portion of his despatch, Captain Maunsell alludes to the questionable methods employed by the French priests in their distribution of relief, and in this connection I venture to refer your Lordship to the Gregorian Patriarch's Encyclical letter, copy of which accompanied my despatch No. 166 of the 6th instant.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 11.)

Van, March 27, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that an improvement has taken place in the situation as regards famine relief.

The snow having partially melted, and the roads become more open, a considerable amount of wheat is now on its way from the Arjish, Aintab, and Bulanuk districts to the north and north-west of the lake, and some has arrived here by boat, so that prices have gone down to 55 to 60 paras an oke for wheat.

The distribution of food relief is continuing favourably, wheat having been bought in Bitlis, brought by boat from Tadvan, and landed and distributed in Karkar and Karchikan districts, south of the lake; while for the Timar district, north of Van, it has been brought by boat from Arjish and landed at the village of Erorin, on the coast.

As regards our seed distribution, it is intended to give to the villagers now, and require from them after the harvest, double this amount given for seed. The yield averages eight- to ten-fold, and the villagers have consented to this arrangement.

The quantity returned after harvest will be redistributed to the most necessitous in each village; and by this means it is hoped that the poorer portion of the village will have something to help them through next winter, and avoid the necessity for relief operations. Some rain has also fallen, which has given hope of a good harvest; and I am glad to say that it is very probable that the merchants, chiefly Armenian, who have been hoarding up wheat here, will now have to sell at a loss, and not at a profit.

I regret to have to say that no relief has been given by the French priests, except under the stipulation that the recipient becomes a Roman Catholic. A number of starving people accepted this condition; but now the greater part of the Kalurder quarter of Van, who became Catholic last autumn, have returned to their former religion, and the villages of Archag and Karakunduz wish to do the same.

From what I have heard from the Turks, this method of obtaining converts disgusts them, and I am sure it is very far from increasing French influence in the country, but rather the reverse. I hear, also, that the Nestorian converts made last autumn in Hekkiari wish to return to their former religion, saying they only became Catholic to make a little money.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 67.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 185.)

Constantinople, April 17, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, inclosing translation of an article extracted from the local press expressing gratification at the improved relations represented as existing between Her Majesty's Government and that of the Sultan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 67.

Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)

Erzeroum, April 4, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation of some extracts from an article published last week in the "Enver-Sharkiyé," a local Turkish paper.

It is natural that political feeling in the provinces should be, to a great extent, a reflection of such sentiments in the capital, and the extracts which I inclose are only useful, therefore, as confirming what is already known to your Excellency. They are interesting, nevertheless, as I have noted an improvement in the feeling towards England during the past ten or fifteen days, expressed in conversation by local officials. One of these, the Director of the Public Debt Office in Erzeroum, mentioned to me the Imperial Order which had appeared lately enjoining all classes and creeds to live in harmony. Such an Order in itself, he added, was of practical use in showing that some cause existed for its publication. This cause was probably the better understanding with England which had become apparent since your Excellency's recent visit to the Palace. He assured me of the general satisfaction which such an improved understanding would give all right-thinking people, especially as it might revive the hope that some general reforms—not alone for the Christian population—might be instituted. The chief reform necessary was the awakening of a sense of honour in the governing classes, and this would be possible if men of honour were appointed as Valis, with power to remove any official in his vilayet convicted of dishonest practices.

I give this official's opinion as he is a Moslem and in communication every day with others of the same class, and as indicating generally the opinion held by all in this country whose ideas are worthy of your consideration.

It is certain that a general feeling of friendship towards England is returning, together with one of conviction that the recent massacres and disturbances were a great mistake and one which has done much to injure the prosperity of this country. I have it from a trustworthy source that orders have come generally to the provinces for the more just treatment of the Christian population. This is doubtless a consequence of a desire to please England, and we shall see by degrees whether it is really to bear fruit.

At present I cannot say that the junior officials away in the district are much imbued with a sense of justice, nor do the central authorities appear to take much trouble to ascertain this fact.

I have several instances of oppression to call to the notice of the Governor-General, and this I propose doing to-morrow. I am persuaded that, with the improved feeling prevailing towards England, my friendly representations will meet with attention, and I shall again inform your Excellency on this subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 67.

Extract from the "Enver-Sharkiyé" of April 1, 1899.

(Translation.)

THE friendship which has long existed between the Ottoman and English Governments has still further increased recently owing to praiseworthy efforts on both sides which have been testified to in the public press of both countries.

The Ottoman Government is following England's good example in its desire to be on friendly terms with the whole world, and this is a further proof of their happy union of purpose.

Both commercial and political interests are taken into account in this desire as these interests should increase greatly by such an understanding. England has given practical proof of her desire to befriend Turkey by lowering the interest on her debt, contracted in 1855, from 5 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and for this friendship every Turk should be grateful.

No. 68.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 186.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 18, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 123 of the 13th March, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus reporting the return of the punitive expedition recently sent against the marauding Bedouin tribes of Tell-el-Safa.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 68.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 19.)

Damascus, April 4, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 9 of the 25th February, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that Husreo Pasha has returned from his expedition against the marauding Bedouin tribes in the district of Tell-el-Safa, having succeeded in recovering only 3,500 head of sheep, a very small proportion of the whole number carried off. Moreover, even these, I am informed on good authority, are poor sickly animals which are certainly not the same as those that were stolen. The fact is the Bedouin got wind of the projected expedition some days before it started, and, consequently, the majority of them—for several tribes are inculpated—made good their escape into the desert, defying pursuit by regular troops. Husreo Pasha could not, of course, return empty-handed, and so by the help of Mohammed Agha Jerudi, a well known character, who until quite lately was "Mohafiz" or Protector of the frontier in the Caza of Nebk, he collected 2,000 or 3,000 sheep from those of the Arab Sheikhs who had not succeeded in escaping, and brought them back to Damascus.

I am assured that as many as 40,000 sheep have been carried off by the Bedouin from the districts lying to the east and north-east of Damascus during the last eighteen months, so that the few that have been recovered, even supposing they were sound healthy animals, which they are not, are no great prize.

It would appear that many of the Druses of the Jebel take part in these sheep-lifting forays in company with the Bedouin, with whom they share the spoil.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 69.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 187.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April 18, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, describing the ravages committed by locusts in the Jôlan district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 69.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)

Damascus, April 4, 1899.

Sir,

I REGRET to have to inform your Excellency that locusts are causing terrible ravages in the district which is known as the Jôlan, lying to the south-west of the Hauran, between the latter and the Jordan Valley. The Vali has sent repeated orders to the Mutessarif of the Hauran to do all in his power to arrest the advance of these insects, but I am afraid that so far the measures taken with this object in view have met with only very partial success. Indeed, I myself was in that district a week ago and found young locusts in enormous quantities (many thousands of millions) the whole way along the valley of the Hieromax, a distance of 6 miles. I informed the Vali of this fact immediately after my return to Damascus, and he at once telegraphed fresh instructions for the collection and destruction of the locusts, but the local authorities do not seem capable of coping with the difficulty, [illegible] proportions.

The natural consequence of the receipt of the news here has been a rapid rise in the price of wheat, although the harvest prospects were otherwise good, the weather having been on the whole very favourable.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 70.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 188.)

Constantinople, April 18, 1899.

My Lord,

I **RECENTLY** received a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo complaining of the maladministration of the Commercial Court in that town, attributable, it would seem, to the system in force at the time Mr. Barnham wrote, by which the President and staff of such Tribunals were dependent for their salaries on the Court fees, which appear in Aleppo to be insufficient to provide them with adequate remuneration.

Mr. Barnham asked for my support for a proposal stated to have been submitted by the Minister of Justice to the Council of State for the payment of the officers of Commercial Courts from the Provincial Treasuries in accordance with the sytem prevailing for other Courts of Justice.

I caused unofficial representations to be made to the Sublime Porte in the desired sense, and Mr. Barnham now informs me in a despatch, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, that a local paper announces the issue of an Imperial Iradé giving effect to the reform proposed by the Minister of Justice.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 70.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.)

Aleppo, April 6, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 6th ultimo, respecting the proposed reform in the payment of the President and members of the Provincial Commercial Courts, I have the honour to report that a Notice was last week published in the local journal "Frat" announcing that by Imperial Iradé the President and members of these Courts are in future to be paid by the local Treasury; and I am

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No. 71*.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 194. Confidential.)

Constantinople, April 20, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 18, Confidential, of the 18th January, I have the honour to transmit copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Weakley, Commercial Attaché, on the negotiations which appear to be still proceeding with the Sublime Porte for the grant of the Concession for the railway from Tripoli in Syria to the Persian Gulf.

It is stated in this Memorandum that Mr. Meyers has retired from the concern; that the Company to which he belonged has been [illegible] under the style of Messrs. Williams de Broe and Co.; that a powerful Syndicate enjoying the support of Messrs. Rothschild and other well-known financiers, has promised its co-operation, and that, in order to remove the apprehension of a Russian control, Count Kapnist is to be induced to sell his interest in the line.

M. Rechnitzer, an Austrian subject, represents the firm at Constantinople, and the project is under examination in the Turkish Ministry of Public Works.

I have expressed my views fully on the subject of this scheme in my above-mentioned despatch and in my previous reports. The withdrawal of the Russian element puts a somewhat different complexion upon it, but the information at my disposal is not yet sufficiently complete to enable me to form a final judgment. I should be glad to learn from your Lordship whether the strong financial support of which the Company boasts is really behind it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 71*.

Memorandum by Mr. Weakley.

(Confidential.)

Constantinople, April 18, 1899.

I HAVE been able to obtain the following information from Mr. Pears regarding the present position of Count Kapnist's scheme for building a railway from Tripoli in Syria to Koweit:—

Mr. Meyers, of the firm of Messrs. Williams, Meyers, and Co., who, in conjunction with M. Rechnitzer, came to Constantinople last October to facilitate the negotiations carried on by Count Kapnist with the Sublime Porte, has now ceased to be a member of the firm. The new firm, under the style of Messrs. Williams de Broe and Co. continue to take an active interest in the scheme, and have formed a Syndicate composed of the following business houses established in London, to support the project:—

The Exploration Company.
Messrs. Matheson and Co.
Messrs. Rosenthal and Co.
Messrs. S. Neumann and Co.
Messrs. A. G. Schiff and Co.

These houses have also been able to enlist the support and co-operation of the following financial people:—

N. M. Rothschild.
Lord Revelstoke (of Baring's.)
Morgans.
Bleichröder.
Disconto Gesellschaft.
Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas.

This Sydicate is represented by M. Rechnitzer in Constantinople.

In the interest of furthering the negotiations with the Turkish authorities, it has been deemed advisable to induce Count Kapnist to give up his interest in the project, and this he has consented to do, in return for a substantial consideration. Count

Kapnist has consequently drawn up a declaration in which he states that he has hitherto been acting on behalf of an English Syndicate, and that having ceased to have any further interest in the Concession applied for, he resigns all his rights in favour of M. Rechnitzer, the representative of the Syndicate, who in future is to be considered the real concessionnaire. This declaration is to be presented to the Ministry of Public Works as soon as the terms upon which Count Kapnist gives up his interest have been agreed to.

M. Rechnitzer has obtained a letter of introduction from the Austrian Foreign Office to the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople, but I understand M. Rechnitzer has not yet presented it. Mr. Block informs me that letters have also been received from Messrs. Rothschilds by the Sublime Porte, recommending M. Rechnitzer.

The draft Convention for the proposed railway has been drawn up by Mr. Alexander Henderson, M.P., and has been submitted to the Ministry of Public Works, where it is now being examined and discussed in detail.

The demand for a kilometric guarantee has not been accepted by the Turkish authorities, but that a proposal, for guaranteeing the line out of the increase of the tithe revenue of the districts through which the railway will pass, has been favourably entertained.

(Signed) ERNEST WEAKLEY,
Commercial Attaché.

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requested by the mercantile community to thank your Excellency for the steps you were so kind as to take in bringing this matter to the notice of the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 71.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 190.)
Constantinople, April 19, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo concerning the alleged migration of the Aniza Bedouin from that province southwards to Nejd, with a view to escaping the vexations of the Turkish tax-gatherer by placing themselves under the protection of Sheikh Ibn Reschid.

The flight of this populous tribe to a region lying far beyond Turkish control is an event worth noting, and I have requested both Mr. Barnham and Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad to report any further information which may reach them on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 71.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15.)
Aleppo, April 7, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that considerable uneasiness has been caused here in Government circles by a report that the Aniza Bedouins, to escape the vexations of the tax-gatherer, have quitted Northern Syria, and are, it is believed, wending their way to Nejd, to place themselves under the protection of Sheikh Ibn Reschid.

It appears to be certain that they have removed their tents and flocks beyond the reach of the troops at Deyr-zor, but considering their great numbers, their further progress would probably be arrested in the Vilayet of Damascus.

In proceeding to Nejd, they follow the natural instinct of returning home to their own country, but in view of the lack of pasturage there, they will probably return north sooner or later.

The Bedouins rightly dread the approach of the troops sent out every spring to collect taxes, and endeavour to place themselves beyond their reach; but circumstances compel them to return.

It is impossible to give an accurate estimate of their numbers, but I find that the late Colonel Stewart, in his well-known Report upon the Bedouins (1882), gives the total number of tents as 18,000.

This movement of the Aniza means a heavy loss of revenue to the Aleppo Government, and if they eventually reach Nejd may entail political consequences in Arabia, which, at this distance, I am unable to gauge.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 72.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 24.)

(No. 195.)

Constantinople, April 20, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 49 of the 13th instant, I have the honour to report that, on learning from the Acting British Consul at Erzeroum, whom I had consulted as to the distribution of the 600*l.* granted by the Armenian Relief Committee for the relief of Van, Bitlis, and Erzeroum, I have sent 200*l.* to Colonel Massy for the last-mentioned place, and 300*l.* to Captain Maunsell for Bitlis.

In view of the improvement in the situation at Van, reported in my despatch No. 183 of the 15th instant, and of the large sums recently sent to Captain Maunsell, I have thought it well, before sending further funds for the relief of that place, to inquire by telegraph whether Captain Maunsell needs the 100*l.* which I still have at my disposal. I retain the sum pending his reply.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 73.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 28.)

(No. 198.)

Constantinople, April 24, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 131 of the 16th ultimo, in which I forwarded copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, reporting on the unsatisfactory condition of public order in that town, I have the honour to state that, as from subsequent advices from Mr. Drummond Hay there appeared to be no improvement in the situation, I caused representations to be made unofficially to the Porte on the subject.

I have now the honour to forward herewith copy of a further despatch from Mr. Drummond Hay, reporting that the Vali has received orders to seize and exile the ringleaders of the recent disturbances.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador).
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 73.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 29.)

Beirout, April 14, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 26 of the 29th March, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Vali of Beirout, who returned from Nablous on the 7th instant, received instructions from the Porte to seize and exile the ringleaders of the late disturbances in Beirout. It appears that Reshid Bey was reprimanded on a former occasion for passing a sentence of exile, to Tripoli in Barbary, on one of these persons, and he had therefore to apply in this instance for the necessary instructions.

It is, however, doubtful whether his Excellency will succeed in laying hands on the true culprits, as they are surrounded in this town by many friends. They will probably be warned of the orders received by the Vali, and will disappear from the vilayet only to return again when the agitation against them has subsided.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY

No. 74.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 201.)

Constantinople, April 27, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a journal of recent events in Syria and Palestine, prepared by Mr. Norman, Third Secretary in this Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 74.

Journal of recent Events in Syria and Palestine.

1. *Russian Religious and Educational Propaganda.*

A LARGE proportion of the reports addressed to this Embassy by Her Majesty's Consular Representatives in Palestine and Syria during the present year have dealt with the general question of the spread of Russian religious and educational influence in these countries, and, more particularly, with the contest, still in progress, between the Greek and Russian factions in the Synod of Antioch, respecting the election of a Patriarch to that Chair.

Reports on these subjects have been furnished to the Foreign Office in Sir N. O'Conor's despatches Nos. 29 of the 2nd February, 139 of the 22nd March, 150 of the 29th March, and 180 of the 13th April. As, however, the question is one of considerable interest and importance, it seems worthy of separate treatment, and for some further remarks of the subject. I accordingly venture to refer to the Memorandum inclosed in Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 203 of the 27th April.

2. *Public Order in the Vilayet of Beirut.*

The condition of the vilayet, and more particularly of the town, of Beirut, has lately been far from satisfactory. Besides disturbances on a considerable scale, it is said that hardly a day passes without bringing to light a case of assault on a Christian by a Moslem.

It would appear that the bad characters of the town form an organized gang, many of whom are engaged in smuggling. The police, which chiefly consists of natives of the town and neighbourhood, is not only inefficient and badly organized, but is not innocent of complicity with the malefactors. The result is that even if one of them is brought before the Courts he is acquitted, as nobody dares to give evidence against him. It is even whispered that certain high officials of the vilayet are not above sharing in the profits of the smugglers.

The Vali, Reshid Bey, though perhaps not ill-disposed, is lacking in the energy necessary to suppress these disorders.

This state of things has been the subject of representations on the part of the French, Italian, and British Consuls-General.

So long ago as the 1st March the last-named called on the Vali and made a strong remonstrance, urging his Excellency to lose no time in restoring confidence among the Christians by adopting strong measures in defence of order and public safety. Reschid Bey replied that the necessary instructions had already been given, but added that the gravity of the situation had been exaggerated by the timidity of the Christians.

On the 19th March, however, a more serious disturbance than usual took place. This was an affray between a constable and three soldiers on the one hand, and a gang of about ten Moslem smugglers on the other. The smugglers were entering the town in several cabs full of powder, cartridges, and tobacco, and on seeing the soldiers at once fired, wounding two of them and a Customs guard, who was also present, and killing the constable on the spot.

The soldiers retaliated, but unhappily only succeeded in killing the driver of the first carriage (a Christian), and wounding two of the smugglers, all of whom escaped.

Mr. Drummond-Hay again called on the Vali, and spoke very strongly of the necessity of making an example of the ringleaders of the band, not only in the interests of public order, but also in order to silence the rumours current in the town, that officials are not wanting who are in league with the malefactors.

The Vali replied that no less than twenty persons were under arrest in connection with the affair, but admitted that the chief offenders had escaped to the Lebanon, where he hoped they would soon be captured by the provincial authorities.

These individuals are two brothers, named Indihar, one of whom was lately tried for the murder of a Christian in Beirut, and acquitted in the Court of Appeal in spite of conclusive evidence of guilt.

Mr. Hay has since been able to report an improvement in the state of the town since the institution of a body of 150 watchmen who patrol the streets at night; but he does not anticipate that this satisfactory result of his representations will be permanent.

A report is current that the Indihar brothers are concealed in Beirut, and that their whereabouts is well known to the police, but no attempt has been made to arrest them.

Mr. Hay anticipates that, so soon as the excitement caused by the smuggling affray shall have subsided, the police will relapse into their normal lethargy, while the 150 watchmen will be reduced to a fraction of their nominal strength; the Municipality will, however, continue to collect from the citizens the money necessary to maintain them at their full number.

If Beirut is to be properly governed, it is absolutely necessary, according to Mr. Hay, that the Vali should receive stringent orders at once to seize and banish the smugglers, who are the main cause of the trouble, and to reorganize the police by the substitution of strangers for natives.

Mr. Block was instructed to make unofficial representations both to the Grand Vizier and at the Porte in this sense, and to urge very strongly that positive instructions should be sent to Beirut on the subject.

Mr. Hay mentions a current rumour that Reschid Bey is to be removed from his post as Vali, and replaced by Raif Pasha, Vali of Aleppo, who has been Mutessarif of Beirut, and has left a high reputation for energy.

The town of Tripoli has also been the scene of disorders, though it is stated that the Christians were in that case the aggressors, having killed a Moslem and wounded two others on the 3rd January. The Moslems retaliated by attacking a well-known and innocent Christian.

The Vali informed Mr. Hay, who lost no time in bringing these facts to his notice, that the guilty persons had been arrested, and the necessary orders given for the maintenance of order. Notwithstanding these measures, two Christians were murdered by Moslems during the early part of March; and the British Vice-Consul found it necessary to complain of the conduct of the police in wantonly assaulting and imprisoning a small British Indian boy, aged 13.

Mr. Hay again warned the Vali, who, as usual, replied that he had already ordered the local authorities to do all in their power to maintain order, and showed a telegram which he had dispatched with that object.

His Excellency also expressed the intention of visiting Tripoli himself in order to inquire personally into the state of affairs there.

3. *The Taxation of the Druses.*

Great difficulty has always been experienced in the collection of taxes among the Druses, and Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus reported last September that, in order to facilitate the process, and generally to improve the relations of the Druses with the Government, the well-known Selim Effendi Naufal, though he would not be made an honorary member of the Administrative Council of the Vilayet of Syria, as had at one time [*sic*] intended, would yet be treated for the future as a kind of unofficial representative of the Druses in the dealings with the authorities.

Mr. Richards reported last February that Selim Effendi had written from Sueda to inform the authorities at Damascus of the progress of negotiations between [the Druses and the Mutessarif of the Hauran on the subject of their taxes. The Mutessarif had informed the Druses that he proposed sending horsemen round the Jebel-el-Drus with orders to collect the taxes due, and, in case of refusal to pay, to obtain from the recusants a signed statement of their reasons for their conduct.

This proposal did not meet with the approval of the Druses, but they stated that they were willing to pay their taxes if they were informed of their nature and amount. The Mutessarif gave them the necessary details, and at the end of March Selim Effendi appeared at Damascus, and was able to state that 88,000 piastres had been paid out of 500,000 piastres due, and that there was hope that the remainder would be forthcoming before harvest. This hope is shared by the authorities, but in Mr. Richards' opinion, it is illusory.

The taxes demanded of the Druses are now as follows:—

1. Military exemption, 100,000 piastres.
2. Tithe, 200,000 piastres.
3. Verghi (land and house tax), 100,000 piastres.

Making a total of 400,000 piastres, plus the sheep and goat tax, making about 500,000 piastres in all.

The reduction to which the Government has consented in this matter will be seen to be enormous, when it is remembered that 600,000 piastres was formerly paid in the Jebel for tithe alone, and in view of this fact two Druse Notables have recently addressed a kind of Circular to their compartiots exhorting them to pay what is now demanded, since, in event of refusal, the old rate will be exacted by force.

4. *Ismaïl Hakki Pasha.*

This officer, who had been in command of the 5th Army Corps, was early in January appointed Inspector of the same corps at a salary of £T. 150 a-month, a sum equal to that which he received when in command.

He has now been offered the command of the 7th Army Corps, which is quartered in the Yemen, in succession to Abdullah Pasha, but though he has intimated his willingness to accept this post, the appointment is not yet officially announced.

It is rumoured that Abdullah Pasha is to be appointed Vali of the Hedjaz, in the place of Ahmed Ratib Pasha.

5. *Mr. Richards reports the Death both of the Cadi and of the Mufti of Damascus.*

The Cadi, Ahmed Attallah Effendi, had held office for many years in Cyprus, and had a sincere friendship and esteem for England. He had been but a short time in Damascus, where his reputation was already a high one.

His successor, Ismet Effendi, has hitherto been a member of one of the religious Courts at Constantinople.

The new Mufti, Sheikh Salih Effendi Catana, is said to have gained the preference over nineteen other candidates, by a present of £ T. 2,000 to the Sheikh-ul-Islam. The Vali strongly disapproves of his appointment.

6. *The Maronite Patriarch, Mgr. Hanna-el-Haj, died on December 24, aged 83, after occupying the Chair since April 1890.*

The Bishops met at once for the election of a successor, which their rule obliges them to do within nine days, and their choice fell on Mgr. Elias-el-Henlik, who has lately held the position of Principal of the Maronite College in Rome.

He was educated at the French College at Ghazir (in the Lebanon) and in Rome. Speaks French and Italian fluently, and is considered by his community to be a man of high intelligence and integrity. He is 59 years old, was Secretary to the last Patriarch but one, and was a popular candidate for the Chair at the last election, though an unsuccessful one.

Constantinople, April 20, 1899.

No. 75.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 202.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 27, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a journal of recent events in Mesopotamia, prepared by Mr. Norman, Third Secretary in this Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 75.

Journal of recent Events in Mesopotamia and on the Persian Gulf.

1. *Proposed establishment of a Quarantine Station at Mohammerah.*

IN the month of February a full report was furnished to the Foreign Office of a proposal communicated to the Constantinople Board of Health for the establishment at Mohammera, in Persian territory, of a Turkish quarantine station, with the alleged object of preventing arrivals from India from avoiding quarantine at Basra.

This proposal, which originated with the Vali of Basra, has the support of the Persian Consul at that place, and of most of the Delegates on the Board of Health. Dr. Dickson, however, not only considers this proposal impracticable in itself, but also sees in it another attempt to establish Ottoman control throughout the whole course of the Shat-el-Arab.

Her Majesty's Consul at Basra now reports that the assertion of the Vali, that passengers from India to Basra find no difficulty in persuading the boatmen of Mohammera to land them surreptitiously at Basra so that they avoid quarantine is perfectly true. Mr. Wratislaw adds, however, that the same thing happens in the case of passengers from Persian territory, and that, in fact, there is never the slightest difficulty in obtaining an entry by offering a small bribe to the Turkish zaptiehs, who form the sanitary cordon. It is therefore quite immaterial, so long as these functionaries are venal, whether a quarantine station is situated at Basra or at Mohammera, or both.

Mr. Wratislaw has reason to believe that the Vali's proposal, though professedly spontaneous, really originated in instructions received by his Excellency from Constantinople. No steps have, however, been taken as yet to give effect to it.

2. *Distress at Mosul*

The British Consular Agent at Mosul reports that there is great dearth of food in that town and neighbourhood, and that the labouring classes are unable to get work. The distress is especially great among the Christian inhabitants, who have already sold all their goods to obtain food, and some of whom have even disposed of their children of both sexes to Mussulmans at low prices. There are numerous deaths from starvation every day. Mr. Rassam begs Her Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Bagdad to interest some charitable Society in England in the case of these poor people, as was done, he states, on the occasion of the last famine.

3. *Official Corruption in the Vilayet of Mosul.*

A local bandit, named Selim Agha, has offered 250 liras for distribution between the Acting Vali (Hamdi Bey), the Secretary of the Vilayet, and the Mutessarif of Dhok, if they will accept his submission and obtain from the Porte his pardon for the robberies he has committed. These functionaries accepted the money and promised to do their best for Selim Agha. The Agha also corrupted the Chief of Police with £ T. 10 and a mule, to allow him to recapture, with a show of force, from the police, some sheep which he had stolen, and which the police had recovered from him.

In the Caza of Dhok the corruption of the Kaïmakam has been such that the Administrative Council and Notables have petitioned the Acting Vali on the subject, and the erring official has been summoned to Mosul to answer the accusations brought against him.

4. *Hazim Effendi.*

Hazim Effendi has been named Vali of Mosul, and is expected shortly to reach his post.

Constantinople, April 22, 1899.

No. 76.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 203.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, April* 27, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a Memorandum on the spread of the educational and religious influence of Russia in the Greek Orthodox community in Syria and Palestine, prepared by Mr. Norman, Third Secretary in this Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 76.

Memorandum respecting the Spread of Russian Influence in Syria and Palestine.

THE population of Syria and Palestine is not probably more than 3,000,000 or 3,500,000, of which three-fourths are Mahommedans, while the remaining fourth are Christians, Jews, Druses, and adherents of certain other little-known sects.

The Christians of Syria are not therefore a numerous body, and are, moreover, subdivided into a large number of different Churches, some of which are dependent on Rome, while others are separated. The former group include, besides the Latins, who use the ordinary Roman rite, the Greek, Syrian, Chaldæan, and Armenian Catholic Churches, and the Maronites.

These communities are chiefly the result of the labours of French and Italian missionaries, and have the privilege of retaining their ancient liturgies, which usually differ but little from those in use in the separated Oriental Churches. The differences in dogma between each Catholic and the corresponding separated community being also inconsiderable, it follows that individuals and even whole villages pass somewhat easily from one to the other.

The most important of the separated communities is the Greek Orthodox, which corresponds to the Greek Catholic. There is also the Armenian Gregorian, corresponding to the Armenian Catholic, the Nestorian to the Chaldæan Catholic, and the Syrian Jacobite to the Syrian Catholic. There is no community exactly corresponding to the Maronites, who, formerly Monothelites, became Catholics *en masse* in 1182.

The Abyssinians and Copts are represented at Jerusalem, but are purely exotic communities, having no native adherents.

The Greek Orthodox Church is governed by the Œcumenical Patriarch at Constantinople, and by the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, of whom the last resides at Damascus.

So far as the two Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch are concerned, the name "Greek" has but little racial significance, as the adherents of that Church and most of the clergy are Syrians by race, speaking Arabic, and not understanding Greek at all. Owing, however, to the exclusively Greek character of the Œcumenical Patriarchate, it has up to now been a matter of course that all the higher clergy should be, not natives, but Greeks, though it is, naturally, essential that they should be Ottoman subjects.

The result is that there is a distinct line of demarcation between the Prelates on the one hand, and on the other, the lower clergy and laity, who differ from them by race, language, and traditions; nor is it unnatural that the lower clergy should be discontented at being debarred by an accident of race from all preferment, while the Greeks, at the same time, are anxious to continue their enjoyment of the exclusive right to the lucrative benefices of the Orthodox Church in Syria, which is a rich community.

Russia has not been slow to see the chance offered by this state of things, and has used the opportunity to the fullest extent, and in the most methodical manner.

The object in view is gradually to detach the Orthodox Church in Syria from the Œcumenical Patriarchate, as has been done in the case of the Orthodox Church in the Balkan States, and to make it, while nominally autocephalous, absolutely dependent on Russia, the great Orthodox Power. To this end various means are employed: the interest of the Russians themselves in things connected with Palestine is fostered, while Russian influence in that country is extended by educational means, and, finally, Russian efforts are directed to ousting from their privileged position the Greek clergy, and putting natives in their places, thus destroying the influence of the Œcumenical Patriarchate.

There exists in Russia for these purposes a body called the "Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society," of which the Grand Duke Sergius is President, and it works in all the ways above indicated.

Interest in Syria and Palestine generally, and, of course, in the Holy Places in particular, is kept up by means of pilgrimages organized by the Society.

The best-conducted peasants in each village are in turn transported in each year to Jerusalem; the journey is, of course, not luxurious, but it is performed at a wonderfully cheap rate, and the travellers are not exacting as to comfort. Arrived at their destination, in batches of 3,000 or 4,000 at a time, they are lodged in enormous hospices erected for their reception and usually managed by monks. In the middle of March last there were 5,000 of these pilgrims in Jerusalem, and 10,000 more were expected to arrive shortly. The whole town was full of them; on the country roads they were to be met by hundreds on their way to or from Bethlehem or Jericho—scores of them were bathing in the Jordan.

By this means, after some time the whole rural population of Russia will have made the pilgrimage, and by it their naturally deep devotion will be inflamed to such an extent that they will gladly die for any cause having any connection with the Holy Places.

The demeanour of these people is most admirable, and though everybody in the Holy Sepulchre Church is devout, the fervour of all seems cold beside that of the Russian pilgrims.

Perhaps the most effective weapon in the hands of the Palestine Society is the control of the Orthodox schools, which they have contrived gradually to acquire all over the country, and through which the rising generation of the Syrian Orthodox community is becoming Russianized.

An interesting despatch on this subject, written by Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, has already been transmitted to the Foreign Office.* In it Mr. Richards describes in detail the really remarkable efforts made by the Russian Government, through the Palestine Society, with this object throughout the Vilayet of Syria, and the Lebanon. Not less than £T. 6,000 are annually spent by the Society in paying the rents of school buildings, and the salaries of teachers, and in maintaining a Russian doctor at Damascus. This gentleman, who is really an agent of the Society, makes frequent journeys through the country, in the course of which he treats, free of charge, all who apply to him, and also furnishes his patients, gratis, with the necessary medicines. Some of the teachers in the schools are, themselves, Russians, and the Russian language is freely taught. The Director-General, who resides at Damascus, is himself a Russian, and only very recently M. Anitchkoff, Adjoint to the Minister of Public Instruction in St. Petersburgh, arrived at Damascus and began an inspection of all the Othodox schools in the vilayet.

Meanwhile, these schools continue to be nominally Ottoman and are not officially recognized as Russian.

What Mr. Richards reports as to the state of things in Syria is not less true in Palestine, and it is stated on good authority that certain villages near Jerusalem, which twenty years since were Greek Catholic, have now become almost entirely Orthodox owing to the superior inducements which that community is able, by Russian aid, to offer to the parents of children attending its schools. It is difficult to gauge the accuracy of this assertion unless one lives in the country, but it is certainly made, and I was even shown one village on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, called Bet Jala, where

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* No. 17.

such a change is said to have taken place, and where the people are certainly Orthodox to-day.

So long as the Orthodox Palestine Society was willing to confine its operations to the field of education, it probably encountered little opposition from the Ecclesiastical authorities of the community, who were doubtless glad to receive pecuniary aid for their schools. But a new development has recently taken place, which has filled them with just apprehension. This is the tendency which Russia has lately shown to take advantage of the difference noticed above as existing between the higher Orthodox clergy in Syria, and their subordinates and flock. Here, as in the case of the Balkan States, she has taken sides against the Œcumenical Patriarchate to the interests of which these Prelates are all more or less devoted.

The most striking example of this new development of Russian policy is offered by the affair of the election of the Patriarch of Antioch. The stages in the struggle to which this election has given rise have already been reported to the Foreign Office as they came on,* but it may nevertheless be well to recapitulate shortly the leading facts connected with it.

On the death of the Orthodox Greek Patriarch of Antioch, at the end of 1891, the Synod of twelve Prelates proceeded to elect as his successor Mgr. Spiridon, acting Bishop of Bethlehem, a Greek. This election was carried out in precisely the usual manner, but no sooner was the new Patriarch chosen, than the Russian Consul at Damascus, M. Belaiew, who was then recently appointed and who has since proved a very zealous agent of the Palestine Society, set himself to the task of working up the opinion of the native Orthodox community against their chief. He succeeded so well that Mgr. Spiridon was actually obliged to leave Damascus surreptitiously and take refuge at a convent some distance from the city, whence he made his way to Constantinople.

The election of a new Patriarch now devolved on the Synod, whom the Russian Consul spared no efforts to win over to his side. He was so successful in this that seven of the twelve Prelates composing the Synod gave way and showed their willingness to present a list of candidates containing the names of native Syrians belonging to the Patriarchate of Antioch to the exclusion of individuals belonging to the other Patriarchates.

The Œcumenical Patriarchate naturally used every endeavour to procure the inclusion of Greek candidates in the list, and the Porte, also well aware of what must be the ultimate result of a Russian triumph in the matter, invited the Synod to comply with this desire. The majority of that body refused, on certain technical grounds connected with the religious law, to present any list other than that which they had already drawn up, containing only native candidates: the Œcumenical Patriarchate declared these objections to be invalid.

The Russian Ambassador, thereupon, in March last, applied personally to the Sultan in the name of the Emperor, in favour of the election of a native. Soon after, the Vali of Damascus convoked certain members of the Synod, and informed them that he had instructions to depose the *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate, Mgr. Germanos, Bishop of Cilicia, to appoint in his stead Mgr. Malateos, Bishop of Laodicea, and at the same time to invite him to proceed at once to the election. The deposed Prelate belonged to the Greek, while his successor is of the Russian, party. Nazim Pasha's instructions to act as he did came, not from the Porte, but from the Palace, yet, when the Œcumenical Patriarch appealed to the former, he was told that nothing could be done, and a deputation to the Porte on behalf of those Patriarchs met with a similar reception. The Porte was therefore well aware of the danger to which Ottoman sovereignty in Syria is exposed by this official encouragement of Russian propaganda, but felt that in face of the Sultan's attitude, resistance was useless. They instructed the Vali, however, to inform the Synod that a deputation from the three Patriarchates had protested against the exclusion of candidates depending on them, as an infringement of their rights. To this information the Synod replied by telegraphing to the Porte that they were legally and constitutionally justified in taking the course of which complaint was made: and they begged at the same time that no further obstacles might be placed in the way of their holding an immediate election.

It would seem, however, that the triumph of the Russian party is not yet assured, for Nazim Pasha has lately been instructed by the Porte to inform the Synod that a list must be presented containing the names of the candidates proposed by the three Patriarchates of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, and, moreover, that the Sultan will recognize no Patriarch who is not approved by the remaining three. This is at least a momentary check on Russian designs, yet it is not possible at this moment to foretell who will gain the day. It is, however, safe to say that, even should Russia be unsuccessful in this instance, she will not lose courage, but will display that perseverance which she has already so often shown in other matters.

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* Nos. 17, 49, 51, and 65.

Such, at any rate, is the belief of the Greek Prelates of Syria,* who foresee that an attempt will be made to fill the throne of Jerusalem, when it becomes vacant, by a native Prelate, whose appointment will be only a preliminary step to the appointment of a Russian Patriarch.

The predominant position already achieved by Russia in Jerusalem cannot fail to strike even the most superficial observer. In the Holy Places the Orthodox Church is everywhere predominant, and the assured demeanour of its ecclesiastics presents a curious contrast to the subdued air of the Latins.

The city itself and its neighbourhood is dotted with Russian establishments, and it is really not too much to say that almost every new building of importance which is to be seen there is either a Russian church, a Russian convent, or a hospice for the reception of Russian pilgrims.

Russian money is also freely lavished on the other Christian communities not in communion with Rome, whom it is hoped one day to gather into the Orthodox fold. The [illegible] rather imposing church [illegible] round the building, and who is able to speak Arabic, states that the object in question came from Russia.

The same phenomenon is visible, in a lesser degree, in the church of the Coptic convent adjoining the Holy Sepulchre.

This state of things is doubtless far from being agreeable to France, who, in the [illegible] It appears, however, [illegible] and Syria [illegible] France [illegible] supposed to protect in the East, though, up to the present, without apparent success.

(Signed) H. NORMAN.

[illegible]

No. 77.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 204.)

Constantinople, April 27, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Consul at Erzeroum, respecting the recent operations for the relief of Armenians in his district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 77.

Lieutenant-Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)

Erzeroum, April 11, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, much distress prevailing in the rural districts of this province, I have begun a distribution of seed-grain, with the co-operation of the Reverend R. Stapleton, of the local Protestant Mission.

In this work we are confining ourselves to the barest necessities of the really needy, who are alone to receive assistance. I have also thought it wise to give in grain only, not in money, and this only for seed purposes, making villages responsible for the present

support of their poor. This I have done, as our funds are so low that it is prudent to reserve them entirely for seed with a view to averting a famine next winter, and also as it is well to let these people feel the weight of their responsibility in mutual aid.

I propose dealing with the several districts around the town of Erzeroum, as a centre, by degrees, as the snow melts. I have already considered the wants of Passin and Khunus, towards the east and south of Erzeroum. I am authorizing 250 liras between those two districts, although three times that amount would be needed, but I have explained that money is scarce, and that this sum will bring in six-fold, in the harvest, for next winter. The original amount is then to be recredited to us, and this will enable us to supply the wants of those who still remain very poor.

At the same time, I have made friendly representations to the Vali on the following matters, receiving from him, in reply, most satisfactory assurances. First, I informed him of our relief distributions, asking him to take all necessary precautions to have our funds safeguarded, and informing him at the same time, that as soon as the snow melts I shall visit some of the distressed districts to personally control the work, and asking him to be so kind as to give me some local official to accompany me. While thanking me he assured me that nothing distributed by us would be touched by any one, and that he would instruct the various Kaïmakams to be at my disposal when I went round. I thought it wise to adopt this attitude, first, because the Government could have no doubt as to our object being a purely charitable one, and again, so as to make the Government responsible for the safety of our agents and our funds.

I took this opportunity to bring to his Excellency's notice the following irregularities:—

The taxes are, in some cases, levied with the forcible aid of the police. The taxes of Armenians who emigrated to Russia during the recent disturbances are levied still, with arrears, on their native villages.

The Government offices and archives of Passin having been destroyed by fire, all back taxes since 1300, that is, for sixteen years, are being rigorously collected in all cases where a receipt for previous payment cannot be produced. This is the case in several villages. One has had to pay forty, another eleven, liras for the 1308 sheep tax. It is inconceivable that such a tax would be left so long in arrears, as the usual alternative to its non-payment is the seizure of so many sheep in lieu thereof. Another village has had to pay forty liras for emigrants who are still in Russia.

Cases arise of military officers being given an order for their pay on certain villages, payment of which they then enforce without mercy.

The military commutation tax had been partly levied before the order came for its temporary remittal.

These are a few of the legitimate grievances and injustices under which these poor starving people are groaning. As I hoped that our Vali would not countenance such irregularities if he once became really aware of their existence, I hastened to lay them before his Excellency in a friendly spirit and with exact details, the result being that he will institute an inquiry, and take the necessary steps to their ceasing. I shall be kept informed as to the result, and I have no doubt that considerable good will result from my present action.

During my conversation with Raouf Pasha we spoke at some length on the political situation, and he expressed himself extremely pleased at the increasingly friendly relations between this country and England. He also said that great general reforms were necessary by which an honest Central Government would be appointed with equally honest officials at the head of each province, full power being given to them to dismiss any officials under them for want of integrity. He is himself tired of his life here, and will soon succeed, no doubt, in securing his departure. He will be a great loss. I shall keep your Excellency informed as to our further relief operations and necessities. In the meantime I would beg that authority to draw a further sum of 200 liras might be telegraphed to me.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul.

No. 78.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 206.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April 27, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship copy of a very interesting despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting the rescue of an English traveller, Mr. Sykes, from shipwreck on the Lake of Van by Hamidieh troops, and containing information with regard to the condition of affairs in Captain Maunsell's district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Van, April 10, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to report that Mr. Mark Sykes, an English traveller from Jerusalem, Damascus, Bagdad, and Mosul, arrived here on the 2nd instant, and left on the 5th for England by way of Bayazid and the Trans-Caucasus. Some of his experiences are interesting as bearing on the Hamidieh question.

He left Tadvan, at the south-west corner of the lake, to cross by boat to Van; a storm came on, and the boat was driven on the rocks near Parket, a village 12 miles from Adeljivas.

It was on the point of going to pieces when a Hamidieh officer and some men came down with ropes, which they threw to the boat, and managed to tow her into the small harbour at Parket.

The crew of the vessel were Armenians; they had been rendered quite helpless by the storm; but when they saw they had fallen into the hands of the Hamidieh, they became even more terrified than before.

On seeing an English traveller, the Hamidieh Lieutenant, Mustafa Agha, of Hussein Pasha's own regiment, brought a horse for Mr. Sykes, and rendered him and his servants every possible service. They remained at Parket four days, while the boat was being repaired, during which time the Kurds insisted on doing Mr. Sykes all possible honour, and gave him a special Hamidieh guard for his tents.

They sent word to Hussein Pasha at Patnotz, and were most anxious that Mr. Sykes should go over there to see him.

Mr. Sykes was several times brought into Parket village, where the Kurds fêted him, at first, as he thought, in their own houses, but, as he subsequently discovered, in the houses of the leading Armenians, the Armenian landlord standing by in a corner while the Kurds did the honours of the house.

[illegible] sent me a telegram from Adeljivas, and I arranged with the Vali for an escort to bring him round the north shore of the lake to Van; but, repairs having been completed, he came on here by the same boat.

The [illegible] taken at Adeljivas [illegible] appear to have been informed of the occurrence at all, as apparently the Kurds wished to have all the credit to themselves.

Coming so soon after the outrage on Dr. Belck in the same country, I have gone into the detail of this incident, which, I hope, proves that the Kurds can distinguish between an English traveller and those of other nationalities, and that the Government has given stringent orders, after Dr. Belck's affair, for the safety of European travellers.

I do not think it has been mentioned previously that Dr. Belck wore the Russian flat cap; his servants were all Russian Armenians, to whom he spoke in Russian, so that there may be some truth in the story that the Kurds mistook the party for revolutionists. Curiously enough, before starting for Mosul, the German party discarded their Russian caps, and had some made after the pattern of one of mine.

When Mr. Sykes was here I took him to see Ahmed Pasha, the Hamidieh Commandant here, whom I thanked for the creditable manner in which the Hamidieh officer had rescued and treated Mr. Sykes.

Ahmed Pasha was extremely pleased at this, and said he would inform the Commandant at Arjish, under whom the officer was serving.

I have not dropped the question of endeavouring to procure the capture of Kassim who committed the outrage on Dr. Belck, and have taken this opportunity to press it again on the Vali, who tells me he is still in hiding near the Persian frontier, has not returned to his regiment, and also that he has information that Zekki Pasha will give orders for his arrest.

A week ago a fight took place in Albak, near Bashkala, between Sheref Bey, the notorious Kurd Chief of the Shikifti tribe, and some regular troops, under Salih Bey, the Commandant of Bashkala, the immediate cause being the attempt to evade the sheep tax by hiding away a number of the sheep.

Sheref Bey proved himself at the time of the massacres to be an inhuman scoundrel, and his acts then and since have been the subject of numerous despatches.

After a sharp struggle, Sheref Bey himself was captured and brought [*sic*] is said that Sheref Bey arrived in Bashkala with scarcely a rag on his back.

There has been a warrant out against him for some time from the Courts here, and he will probably be brought in for trial shortly.

The fact that he is a Hamidieh Mir Alai, decorated with the Order of the Silver Imtiaz and fourth class Osmanié, makes his capture an event of considerable importance, and indicates a change of policy towards the Hamidieh on the part of the Government which will certainly have a marked effect on the security of the country generally, and on the behaviour of the neighbouring Chiefs.

It is to be remarked that the capture was carried out by regular troops, and I think it shows how easy it is for the Government to deal with turbulent Kurds if they so wish.

Since his capture the country near Bashkala has remained perfectly quiet.

The sheep tax has also been collected from the Menkuri tribe of Kurds on the Persian frontier near Serai, also by a force of regular troops, who found that Mejid Agha, a Hamidieh Major, and brother of the tribal Chief Ibrahim Bey, had hidden away 9,000 sheep; on which Mejid Agha was soundly beaten and forced to pay double the tax of the hidden sheep.

I hear that this evening troops are leaving Van to deal with Jaafer Bey, Chief of the Sheveli Kurds in Timar district, not far north of Van, and collect the sheep tax from him in a similar manner.

I hear that Jaafer Bey was preparing to fight with the Haideranli under Hussein Pasha, but he will not be able to carry out this project now.

It seems that the seven years' [illegible] from taxation which the Hamidieh have hitherto enjoyed are now at an end, and they will in future have to pay.

This subject is of very great importance to the security of this province, and I shall not fail to acquaint your Excellency of any further developments by telegraph.

With reference to the question of Catholic conversions mentioned in my No. 14 of the 27th March, it is interesting to note that the Père de France has now commenced processes in the local Courts against those Armenians of the Kullandur quarter in Van, who became Catholics and subsequently reverted, and from whom he now requires a refund of the money given them in the first instance.

The Armenians contend that it was given as poor relief, and I fancy it will be very difficult to recover it.

The Catholic Armenian Bishop, Père [illegible], has recently obtained a Berat from Constantinople, and claims the right to take a seat on the Council of the vilayet. The Vali has referred the question for decision to Constantinople.

I have inquired regarding the number of Armenian houses in Van and the surrounding villages who have become Catholic, and find it a total of 250. A few of those to whom oxen were given from our relief fund last year, have become Catholic, and Dr. Raynolds proposed to me to take away their oxen and redistribute them, but I declined to assent to any such proposal, as I thought it might be misconstrued into the commencement of a series of religious reprisals on our part.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 79.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 207. Confidential.)

Constantinople, April 27, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 194, Confidential, of the 20th instant regarding the negotiations proceeding between M. Rechnitzer and the Sublime Porte for the grant of a Concession for a railroad from the Syrian coast to the Persian Gulf, I learn from the Austrian Ambassador that M. Rechnitzer, who appears to be a Concession hunter by profession, has applied to him for official support on the strength of a recommendation from the Austrian Foreign Office, and that his Excellency has offered to give him a letter to the Porte stating that he is recommended by his Government, and is backed by a strong financial Syndicate.

The inclosed Memorandum gives an account of an interview which Mr. Weakley has had with M. Rechnitzer. The Memorandum contains some interesting details of the course of the negotiations during the period when the Concession was sought in Count Kapnist's name. That gentleman has now informed the Porte that he has ceased to have any interest in the scheme, and has declared M. Rechnitzer to be the real applicant for the Concession.

M. Rechnitzer's proposals have been carefully examined at the Ministry of Public Works, where certain modifications were agreed to, and the scheme, as amended, is now under consideration at the Palace. It embraces the construction of a line from Alexandretta to some point not yet determined on the Persian Gulf, passing through Aleppo, Deir, Bagdad, and Basra, and a branch line from Bagdad to Nadjef Tesherif viâ Kerbela.

M. Rechnitzer is informed that the Sultan is disposed to grant the desired Concession on condition that the scheme is made to include the construction of a line connecting the new railway with the Anatolian system, running from Konia to some point between Alexandretta and Aleppo, whereby through connection would be established with Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 79.

Memorandum by Mr. Weakley.

(Confidential.)

IN continuation of my Memorandum of the 18th instant I have to report that I have seen M. Rechnitzer, from whom I have obtained the following particulars regarding Count Kapnist's railway scheme.

The communication addressed to the Porte by Count Kapnist, intimating his having ceased to have any further interest in the Tripoli-Koweit Railway scheme, and declaring M. Rechnitzer to be the real applicant for the Concession, has now been handed in. The project is now, therefore, in the hands of M. Rechnitzer, who is carrying on the negotiations with the Porte on behalf of the financial Syndicate mentioned in my previous Memorandum on the subject.

M. Rechnitzer explained that the scheme was first brought forward under Count Kapnist's name, with a view to prevent Russian opposition, and with the idea of obtaining powerful influence, both in St. Petersburgh and in Constantinople, for the furtherance of the project.

With this end in view, Count Kapnist had been successful in obtaining the support of Count Mouravieff and M. de Witte, on the condition that a portion of the capital necessary for the construction of the line was to be raised on the Russian market.

The scheme was, however, from the outset very strongly opposed by Prince Oukhtomsky, and M. Tatischeff, Financial Adviser to the Russian Embassy in London, considered that Russian support should only be given to Count Kapnist in the event of the project he was interested in being entirely placed under Russian control. M. Tatischeff was even of the opinion that, under such circumstances, the Russian Government scheme of extending the Central Asia Railway into Afghanistan might be abandoned.

In the course of subsequent negotiations, MM. de Witte and Romanoff stipulated that a small share capital of 10,000,000 fr. should be raised, of which 6,000,000 fr. was to be held in Russia, and that a debenture capital of 250,000,000 fr. should be obtained in England. These conditions could not be accepted by the London Syndicate, as they would place the line entirely under Russian control, and further negotiations being impossible, it was considered undesirable that Count Kapnist should, under the circumstances, continue to take an active part in the matter, and that he should give up his interest for a substantial consideration.

The terms of the draft Convention have been carefully examined at the Ministry of Public Works, and certain modifications have been agreed to.

The head of the line will be at Alexandretta instead of at Tripoli; the line will pass close to Aleppo on to Deir, and, following the right bank of the Euphrates, will reach Bagdad and Basrah, and will finally bring up at a point to be determined upon later on on the Persian Gulf, situated between Fao and Koweit, if not Koweit itself. M. Rechnitzer said there seemed to be some doubt as to the sovereignty of Turkey over Koweit, a doubt which had been expressed by Lord Curzon at an interview which M. Rechnitzer had had with him; it had, in consequence, been considered advisable to leave the terminus of the line on the Persian Gulf undetermined for the present.

The proposal for the construction of a branch line from Bagdad to Hannekin has not been entertained by the Porte, as that line will form part of the Anatolian Railway Company's scheme which joins Hannekin to Moussoul by way of Kifri. On the other hand, no objection was made to a branch being extended from Bagdad to Nedjef Tesherif viâ Kerbela.

M. Rechnitzer has been informed that His Majesty the Sultan is favourably disposed to grant him the Concession he has applied for on condition that his scheme includes the building of 450 kilom. of railway from Koniah viâ Adana to join the proposed line from Alexandretta at a point between that port and Aleppo, in order to have a through connection with Constantinople over the Anatolian system, which has Koniah as a terminus.

Osman Bey, Sous-Chef de l'État-Major, has received instructions from the Palace to examine M. Rechnitzer's proposals, and his Excellency Tahsin Bey, First Secretary of the Palace, has been instructed to prepare a special Report on the subject for His Majesty the Sultan's perusal.

The modified project for the Concession of the railway applied for by M. Rechnitzer is now as follows:—

Main Line.—Alexandretta to Aleppo, Deir, Bagdad, Basrah, and a terminus on the Persian Gulf.

Branch.—Bagdad to Nedjef Tesherif viâ Kerbela.

Proposed Line.—Koniah viâ Adana on to a point to join the main line between Aleppo and Alexandretta.

Constantinople, April 21, 1899.

No. 80.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 100.)

Foreign Office, May 2, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 177 of the 13th ultimo, reporting that the Damascus-Haiffa Railway Concession has been taken over by the Thames Ironworks Company.

I approve your Excellency's action in giving your support to the agent of the Thames Ironworks Company in his negotiations with the Turkish Government with a view to obtaining an extension of the term of Concession and commencing the actual construction of the line.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 81.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 101.)

Foreign Office, May 2, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 198 of the 24th ultimo, respecting the unsatisfactory state of public order at Beirout.

I approve your action in making unofficial representations to the Porte on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 82.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 5.)

(No. 2.)

Tabriz, April 19, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a further despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran on the subject of further irregular proceedings on the part of the Russian Mission to the Nestorians in Urumiah.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 82.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 2.)

Tabriz, April 19, 1899.

Sir,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 1 of the 16th February, I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency some further reports received from independent and trustworthy sources, showing the continuation by the Russian Mission in Urumiah of the rude methods which they have so far employed in the endeavour to impose their ideas among the Nestorian congregations, which may show a lack of alacrity in joining it, or even of any desire to follow its precepts.

It would seem that the latest assault given by the Russian Church militant in Urumiah has been directed against the Nestorian village of "Geuktépé."

This village already possesses Roman Catholic and Presbyterian chapels beyond its own old Syrian place of worship, and considering, perhaps, that their spiritual needs were already sufficiently provided for, the villagers had shown no desire for the presence of the exponents of the Orthodox faith.

On arriving at "Geuktépé," the Russians found the majority of the old Syrian Churchmen with their priest at their head holding aloof and the church closed.

This was an obstacle which had no restraining effect upon the members of a Mission who, as reported in my above-mentioned despatch, had not hesitated to trust the supremacy of their religious convictions, as well as of their bodily strength, to the test of personal combat.

An entrance being found by means of a window, the Russian priests entered the church, and soon broke open the door.

From what I can gather, it appears, according to ancient tradition and custom, that so long as a single old Syrian remains in a village the church cannot be alienated or be given over to other religious denominations.

The weakness of the position held by the old Syrians is the fact that their greatest Bishops now belong to the Orthodox faith, so that their appeals even to the Mahommedan owners of their villages, under the above circumstances and owing to the protection given to the Russians by the Government or Tabriz authorities, are likely, as has actually happened in the present case, to remain unheeded.

The feeling of anxiety and uneasiness produced among the old Syrians by acts such as those I have just alluded to, and which seem to be but a few specimens among many others, as well as the alarm and exasperation raised among the rather fanatical Mahommedan populations in Urumiah at the sight of the vigorous and unrestrained actions of the Russian Mission, can well be imagined.

The sentiments of these last culminated a few days ago in a meeting in Urini, to which some of the highest notables of the district were invited, in order to protest against the actions of the Russian Mission, and to discuss the adoption of the best measures to place a limit to them.

Fortunately, the representatives of the best class of natives behaved most prudently at the meeting, and directed the current of opinion towards the forwarding of an appeal to the Governor-General of Tabriz rather than the adoption of strong measures locally, a proceeding which must have tended to calm the minds of the lower orders in the place, and probably prevented hostile demonstrations against the Christians in general.

It is much to be regretted that we are still without a successor to our ex-Governor-General.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 83.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 8.)

(No. 214.)

Constantinople, April 28, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 95 of the 2nd ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Hodeidah, respecting recent Turkish reverses in the Yemen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 83.

Vice-Consul Ahmed to Consul Devey.

(No. 23.)

Cameran, March 23, 1899.

Sir,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 19 of the 4th March, 1899, I have the honour to report that news reached me to the effect that about a fortnight ago, in a place named Bani Madikha, near Kofal, where one Major and 100 soldiers were stationed, one day one Sheikh of that place came and became very friendly with the Major, second day two other Sheikhs did the same, and on the third day three other Sheikhs repeated the first and second days' proceedings. After five days the above-mentioned six Sheikhs came with their followers, dined with the Major, and then stabbed him, with 200 Arabs killed nearly all the Turkish soldiers who were kept there to guard the place. Six persons escaped and went to the nearest station named Mahabshay, where 500 soldiers and one Kolagasi (Lieutenant-Major) were posted. Hearing the above they left the place and fled to Hajja. About a week ago post for Kofal and Hajja from Hodeidah came back to Hodeidah as the road was in possession of the rebel Arabs.

Most of the places, taken by the Turks a little while ago, have been retaken by the Arabs; only Shabel and Zafeer are in the hands of the Turks.

Recently the Sheikh of Beni Souda, a place in the interior, came with a camel load of money, 200 guns, and 100 sheep to make his submission to the Commander-in-chief of the Yemen, who had with him Sheikhs of Abs and Hajoor, and who told the Sheikhs of Beni Souda to go back to his place, where he would come very soon. Thereupon this Sheikh advised the Sheikhs of Hajoor and Abs to go to their own places. The day previous to that fixed by the Commander-in-chief to go to Beni Souda, the Arabs came and made a great slaughter amongst the Turks.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. U. AHMED.

No. 84.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 8.)

(No. 223.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 3, 1899.*

WITH reference to previous correspondence respecting the rebellion in the Yemen, I have the honour to inclose herewith an extract from the "Levant Herald," according to which the General in Command of the Turkish troops, Abdullah Pasha, reports that he has captured Hamer and Djerat from the rebels.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 84.

Extract from the "Levant Herald" of May 3, 1899.

DESPATCHES from Marshal Abdullah Pasha, dated the 5th ultimo, have been received at the War Office, and give particulars of that day's fighting against the Hashid tribesmen, who have long been in revolt. The Arabs fortified Hamer, and held it in great force. They were, however, dislodged by the troops under Marshal Abdullah Pasha and retired to Djerat, which was on the same day also captured by the Imperial forces. Seeing the futility of further opposition, Sheikh Sina, leader of the tribesmen, made his submission to the Marshal.

No. 85.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 8.)

(No. 225. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 4, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 206 of the 27th ultimo, inclosing copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the condition of affairs in his district, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Block, on the subject of the Porte's change of attitude towards the Kurds alluded to by Captain Maunsell.

In a private conversation some days ago with Mr. Block, the Minister for Foreign Affairs fully indorsed the observations contained in this Memorandum regarding the Porte's recent acquisition of influence, and stated that it had for some time past held the view that the licence enjoyed by the Hamidié was most injurious to the interests of the Empire.

Tewfik Pasha also intimated that the Russians had made strong representation against the disorder prevailing on the frontier, and had at times even threatened to take measures themselves if the Kurds were not controlled.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 85.

Mr. Block to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 118.)
Sir, *Constantinople, May 1, 1899.*

WITH reference to Captain Maunsell's despatch No. 16 of the 10th April, and his telegram of the 28th April, regarding the present attitude of the Turkish authorities towards the Kurds and notably towards the Hamidié, I have the honour to state that the several causes to which this change of front—which was bound to come sooner or later—may be attributed at this moment, are as follows:—

The Porte for some time past has advocated strong measures against the Kurds, and has held the view that the licence which the Hamidié were permitted to enjoy would not only impoverish the Treasury but would cause political complications, external as well as internal.

The creation of the Hamidié regiments was not in itself a bad measure. The idea was by gradually enrolling these lawless highlanders into regiments to bring them under control. Some sixty regiments have now been formed, and some 300 or 400 Turkish officers have been gradually drafted into them, but at first the Kurdish Chiefs only consented to enrol their men on condition that they, their old feudal lords, should have command of them, and unfortunately, immediately after the scheme had been inaugurated, the Armenian question took a very acute form, and the Kurds were used to counteract and suppress the movement, as was to be foreseen, and as General Sir H. Chermside pointed out, would be the case nearly twenty years ago.

The services (?) the Kurds rendered earned the momentary gratitude of the Sultan, who, with his warped ideas and insane prejudices, looked upon the Armenians as a danger to the Empire and to his person, and knew of no other means of subduing them than by annihilating them, the Oriental method, of which so many examples have been seen in this country and other Eastern States, such as Persia and Afghanistan.

The Kurds thus have enjoyed impunity for their misdeeds, and the Ottoman Treasury has been losing considerable revenues, as no Hamidié soldier was even asked for his taxes.

The Porte, as I have said, has throughout held different views to the Sultan, but unfortunately the Sultan, as your Excellency is aware, has not listened to his Ministers since the present Ministry was named, practically by Izzet Bey, then in high favour with the Sultan. Izzet Bey not only persuaded the Sultan to create a dummy Ministry at the Porte, but broke the power of all possible rivals at the Palace—the Raghibs, the Haggi Ali Beys, *et hoc genus omne*. Izzet himself has now fallen, and the Sultan meddles less with the affairs of State, tired and wearied as he is by the incessant strain of the last few years. The Ministry, weak and invertebrate as it is, has therefore acquired a little more initiative in administrative affairs. This is noticeable in many other questions besides the Kurdish question, and will continue until some political crisis again arouses the Sultan into his old feverish activity, or until a new favourite, ambitious and cunning like Izzet, again destroys the partially-awakened independence of the Porte in administrative matters.

This is one reason why the Government is taking measures against the Kurds; but a stronger reason exists: the Sultan is getting tired of the Kurds and the worry they give him both here and in the provinces. Sheikh Abul Huda, who married a daughter of Bedrkhan, the Kurdish Chief, and was the protector of all the Kurdish Beys here as long as he had the ear of the Sultan, was ousted by Izzet Bey, and has not succeeded in regaining his old influence; Zeki Pasha, of Erzingian, has never believed in the Kurds; a Circassian, he has always hated and despised them, and though he has obeyed orders and has cajoled, spoiled, and protected them, when the current turns, his weight with the Sultan—his sister is in the Imperial Harem—will be thrown into the scale against them. The matter is as yet only in an inceptive state, but if the Sultan turns against them and they have no protectors, the Kurds will be treated as they have been treated before, and as they treated the Armenians; that is to say, if they resist, which is doubtful.

Lastly, the Russians have made very strong representations against the disorder existing on the frontier, and have at times threatened to take measures themselves, if the Kurds are not controlled; the Persian Government has complained of Sheref Bey, and the incident of Dr. Belck brought the German Embassy into the question, though only for the moment and in a half-hearted way.

That Sheref Bey will be tried and condemned I doubt, but he will be brought to reason in one way or the other, and we may see at no distant date gradual measures taken against the Kurds in general which cannot but produce a beneficial effect.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

No. 86.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 227.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 9, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copies of two despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at [illegible] ment in the unusual military activity observable in this district, as reported in his despatch of the

21st March, which accompanied my despatch No. 157 to your Lordship of the 30th of the same month.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 86.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.)
Angora, April 10, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that 19,000 rifles of the Mauser pattern with 3,840,000 cartridges to match have, during the past ten days, been forwarded by rail to this vilayet, and that the military authorities are now actively occupied in transporting them to the following centres where depôts exist, viz.: in this province, Sivrihissar, Haimand, Nalliband, Ayash, Bey Bazaar, Yabanabad, Kalaidjik, Denek Maden, Kirshehr, Yuzgat, and Cæsarea, the last-mentioned depôts receiving 2,000 rifles each; in the Castamouni Vilayet Tchangri, Tcherkesh, Chérédé and Boli. The Martinis of the old pattern are, I understand, to be returned to Constantinople, and preparations for their transport are now being made accordingly.

I may add that a report has been circulating among the M[illegible] that either Angora or Cæsarea is to be made the centre of an army corps. [illegible] is, I believe, nothing more than a mere bazaar rumour, and I only give it as showing the great interest which is being excited among the population by the recent somewhat animated [illegible].

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 86.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 16.)
Angora, May 2, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that the [illegible] to which I referred in my despatch No. 10 of the 10th April last, still continues. Since the [illegible] no less than eleven waggons [illegible] Martini rifles, each of the old pattern, have been collected from the various depôts in the province and forwarded by rail to Constantinople, while some 400 sacks containing about 40 new uniforms each have arrived here from the last-mentioned city, and have been ordered to be forwarded to their respective destinations with all possible celerity.

Further, 2,063 recruits, all of last year's conscription, have, during the same interval, been dispatched by rail to Constantinople, their ultimate destination, I understand, being Salonica.

I have also the honour to report that the military authorities are now occupied in making out lists of all the horses and transport animals existing in the various districts of the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

No. 87.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 233.)
Constantinople, May 10, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 164 of the 10th ultimo, forwarding copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting that it was believed to be the intention of certain Nestorian families who had taken refuge in Persia on the murder of their Bishop by the Kurds in 1896, to return to Turkish soil, your Lordship will see from Captain Maunsell's despatch No. 19, copy of which accompanies my despatch No. 234 of

to-day, that these refugee families have now recrossed the frontier to their old homes in the plain of Gavvar.

Captain Maunsell reports that they are being liberally treated in the matter of taxation, and that the Vali states that they are in no danger from the Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 88.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 238.)
Constantinople, May 11, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 208 of the 27th ultimo I have the honour to report that the seven prelates who form the majority of the Greek Orthodox Synod of Antioch, assembled, without previous notice, at Damascus on the night of the 28th ultimo, for the purpose of electing a Patriarch. The five members of the Synod forming the minority opposed to the election of a native candidate refused to take part in the election. The lay Committee, a body owing its origin to Russian influence, was present, as well as the Russian Consul, M. Belaiew.

The Synod elected as Patriarch Monseigneur Malateos, Bishop of Latakia, the *Locum tenens* of the Patriarchate.

I learn on good authority that after the election the Russian Consul promised that he would do his best to get the new Patriarch accepted by the Sultan by inducing the Emperor to make a personal application on the subject to His Majesty.

On hearing of the election the 'Ecumenical [illegible] protesting against it, and also sent copies of his protest to the Grand Vizier and the Minister of Justice.

The question has already been before the Council of Ministers, and the Sublime Porte has telegraphed to the Vali of Damascus informing him that the Government decline to recognize the new Patriarch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have received the accompanying despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the incidents connected with the Patriarchate election.

N. R. O'C.

Inclosure 1 in No. 88.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 29. Confidential.)
Damascus, April 27, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 23 of the 10th instant I have the honour to inform your Excellency that another telegram has been received by the Greek Orthodox Synod from the Grand Vizier confirming the instructions contained in the previous communication, viz., that candidates from other Sees should be eligible for the Patriarchal throne of Antioch.

The persistence of the Porte in this matter is beginning to discourage somewhat the Syrian party, who, relying upon their interpretation of the Imperial Iradé, which would also appear to be the natural one, were convinced that their independence from other Sees was assured to them. I am informed that their present intention is to appeal again directly to His Majesty the Sultan against the decision of his Ministers, as conveyed to them in the Vizirial telegram.

The Greeks at Constantinople and in the Sees of Alexandria and Jerusalem are said to be doing their utmost to retain their hold on this See, spending money freely in the cause. It is, indeed, currently reported here that the Grand Vizier himself has received a heavy bribe—put at £ T. 25,000—to induce him to support their claims, which, in fact, he is doing with considerable energy.

The Vali, who informs me that he had intended to leave Damascus for a tour in the northern districts of the vilayet immediately after Baïram, but who, on account of this election question, has been obliged to relinquish this project, at all events for a time, appears to be much perplexed. Hitherto, he has, while professing the strictest impartiality, shown a tendency to favour the pretensions of the Syrian party, being evidently convinced of their validity. Now, however, that the Porte has declared itself in favour of the Greek faction, he naturally finds his position somewhat difficult, his own inclinations being in conflict with a desire not to appear to oppose the wishes of his superiors.

Even among the members of the Syrian party who are, as I informed your Excellency on a previous occasion, in a very large majority, there are a few who begin to ask themselves whether Russian support, wholehearted and thoroughgoing though it be, will compensate them for the loss of [illegible] at Constantinople, which in times past has been invaluable to them in their conflicts with Roman Catholicism. Even independence, some few venture to hint, when obtained by Russian aid, which is never given gratis, may be purchased [illegible].

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 88.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 30.)
Damascus, April 28, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram of to-day's date, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Bishops constituting the Greek Orthodox Synod, viz., those of Lattakia, Homs, Tripoli, Hama, Akkar, Zahlé, Hasheya, and Beirout (the latter absent, but represented), with the exception of the Bishops of Tarsus, Diarbekir, and Aleppo, the Representatives of the "Greek" party, who refused to take part in the proceedings, met yesterday in the Patriarchate, together with the ten members of the Electoral Committee of laymen, and after a considerable discussion proceeded to elect a Patriarch.

It appears that a long and earnest debate was held, lasting four hours, as to whether they should hold the election at once, and, if so, whether they should inform the Vali of their intention or not. The question was finally put to the vote, and was decided by a large majority in the affirmative on the first count and in the negative on the second, Bishop Malateos being, with three laymen, in the minority. The arguments of the majority were to the effect that they had at present the [illegible] Iradé in their favour, but if they delayed the election much longer their enemies might, by their intrigues, cause another Iradé to be issued repealing and annulling the first; that at present although the Grand Vizier was opposed to them [illegible] the Sultan [illegible] as being favourable to their pretensions, whereas if there were further delay, it might so happen that both the Palace and the Porte would be arrayed against them. As regards the Vali, if they consulted him, there could be no question as to what his advice would be—it was better not to put him in the awkward position of being obliged to forbid the election.

The question being decided, three telegrams were dispatched—one to the Sultan himself, one to the Grand Vizier, and one to the Minister of Justice and Religion, informing them that the election was about to take place.

They then proceeded to vote by ballot for three candidates from whom the final choice would be made, the successful prelates being Malateos, Bishop of Lattakia, Gerassimos, Bishop of Zahlé, and Athanossios, Bishop of Homs.

The eight bishops then went alone to the Cathedral (unaccompanied by the lay Committee men) and held a special service which is known as the Appeal to the Holy Ghost, after which they held the final election—also by ballot—the result of which was that Bishop Malateos was elected unanimously to the Patriarchal throne.

This fact was communicated at once by telegraph to the Sultan, the Grand Vizier, and the Minister of Justice and Religion.

I should have stated that in the first telegram to the Sultan, His Majesty's Iradé was quoted as being sufficient authority for their proceedings, and an earnest appeal was made to his clemency and sense of justice. In the telegrams addressed to the Ministers, it was pointed out that the Iradé authorized them to hold the election, that they had sent to Constantinople a list of the [illegible] —and could not after a year's delay (for the second list was merely a copy of t[illegible])

obtain its restitution; that they were independent, and not to be coerced by the Greek party into a course of action of which they disapproved, &c.

And so the proceedings terminated. I need hardly say that the Vali, who appears to have had no inkling of what was going on, was very angry when the facts were communicated to him.

People here seem to think that the election being a *fait accompli*, there is nothing more to be said; but it is doubtful whether this comfortable view of things will be indorsed at Constantinople, whether at the Palace, or at the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 89.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 239.)
Constantinople, May 11, 1899.

My Lord,

YOUR Lordship will remember that amongst the pending cases included in the list presented to the Sultan, as reported in my despatch No. 179 of the 13th ultimo, there were two claims for the sums of £ T. 100 and £ T. 50 as compensation to two British missionaries, Dr. Macallum and Mr. Martin, for arbitrary treatment at the hands of the local authorities in the Provinces of Aleppo and Adana respectively.

The former of these cases was reported to your Lordship by Lord Currie in his despatch No. 34 of the 13th January, 1897, and both claims have formed the subject of frequent representations to the Porte from this Embassy.

I have much pleasure in reporting to your Lordship that some days ago I received a *note verbale* from the Porte, informing me that the indemnities claimed for these gentlemen had been granted by the Turkish Government, and I have now obtained the money from the Minister of Finance.

I am requesting Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo to inquire of Dr. Macallum and Mr. Martin how and where they would wish their money remitted.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 90.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 241.)
Constantinople, May 11, 1899.

My Lord,

IT would appear from despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput that considerable unrest at present prevails in the Province of Diarbekir, owing to the proceedings of the local authorities who have recently made numerous arrests among the Christians on the charge of conspiracy. An American missionary, Mr. Andrus, was indicted in connection with this charge, but proceedings against him were dropped by orders from Constantinople on representations from the United States' Minister. The Armenians arrested are, however, still in prison, although the charges against them would seem to be baseless. In view of the unsatisfactory condition of affairs in the province and of the anxiety which Mr. Jones reports as prevailing among the Christians, I have directed that gentleman to proceed to Diarbekir, and he informs me that he proposes to do so about the middle of this month.

Some days ago the French Ambassador communicated to me a telegram from the French Consul at Diarbekir, from which it appeared that there was some probability of proceedings being taken against the French and British Consular Dragomans for conspiracy.

I accordingly joined with my French colleague in unofficial representations to the Porte, urging that the Dragomans should only be tried in the presence of a Consular officer, and that any supposed incriminating documents should be interpreted by a person in whom he had confidence.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 91.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 242. Confidential.)

Constantinople, May 11, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship a short Memorandum by M. Marinitsch, reporting that the Minister of Public Works complains that Mr. Hills has not appointed a representative here to treat with him respecting the Haiffa–Damascus Railway, and intimating that delay in this respect might have unpleasant consequences.

I shall be glad if this communication is sent to Mr. Hills.

I drew his agent's attention to this very point before he left some weeks ago, and I do not think it is right for Mr. Hills to leave his Company unrepresented here while at the same time he appeals to me to give him all the support in my power.

If the business is well managed he will probably succeed in getting his Concession to Damascus confirmed. Its prolongation eastward will be a more difficult matter, and, if seriously contemplated, will have to be taken up in a business-like manner.

There are several candidates in the field at present for the Concession of a railway to Bagdad.

Messrs. Rechnitzer's group I have reported on, and Sir T. Sanderson has written a further Memorandum. He is, I suspect, already regarded with the mistrust attached to a Concession-hunter, and I have little doubt he has been brushed aside by the Germans. He stated that he was supported among others by the Diskonto Gesellschaft and Messrs. Bleichröder, of Berlin. Last night the German Ambassador told me that upon inquiry at Berlin he had found out that he was unknown to both, and I have no doubt his Excellency has reported this to the Turkish Government.

M. Cotard, a French subject, has a somewhat similar scheme in hand, and is willing and anxious to combine with an English group of capitalists. The Sultan has, I understand, ordered an inquiry to be made into his proposals, and the matter is now under consideration.

M. Nagelmackers is also, I believe, in the field for the same object.

The most important competitor for the Concession is certainly the Anatolian Railway Company. Experts have already made studies of the line, and I understand that a Commission, under the German Consul here, is about shortly to proceed to Bagdad, following the course of the proposed railway, and with a view to report on the commercial capabilities of that country. The Company have in their favour not only the advantage of the peculiar relations between the Sultan and the German Emperor, but also the Sultan's decided preference for a line starting from Constantinople rather than from the Syrian coast.

I do not regard M. Rechnitzer's scheme as a serious enterprise likely to have any result, nor does he appear to have behind him the English financial houses of Rothschild, &c., as stated by him. Mr. Hills' scheme, as far as the prolongation eastwards from Damascus is concerned, is still in a nebulous condition. Any support I may be asked or instructed to give to either Company will be regarded by the Germans with ill-will, without the probability of leading to a satisfactory result.

Under these circumstances, we lose nothing by abstaining from giving support to either of the British schemes.

The point, however, upon which I am in doubt is whether it would not be advisable to let the German Government understand that we are animated by a friendly spirit towards their railway scheme to Bagdad, and that the exhibition of this feeling should be put to our credit in other directions.

Possibly we might make certain conditions in return for our abstention, and we could, I presume, at any rate count upon a reserved telegraph wire for Indian correspondence along the proposed railway.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Memorandum.

I MET the Minister of Public Works again, and he bitterly complained to me that nobody had appeared at his Department to discuss the Convention for the proposed Haiffa–Damascus Railway which his Excellency Zikhi Pasha wishes to conclude with Mr. Hervey.

Although I have more than once endeavoured to prove to his Excellency that those who have replaced Mr. Pilling are desirous of successfully carrying out this enterprise, yet the Minister, being anxious that the matter should be discussed and settled as soon as possible, requested me to take steps to induce Mr. Hervey to apply to his Department, or to empower an agent to do so.

Delay might perhaps, his Excellency added, result in consequences other than favourable.

(Signed) H. MARINITSCH.

Constantinople, May 10, 1899.

No. 92.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 130.)

Berlin, May 13, 1899.

My Lord,

TO-DAY'S "Cologne Gazette" states that it has received confirmation in Berlin of the rumour published a day or two ago from Paris to the effect that M. Berger, the representative of the Ottoman Bank, had arrived at an Agreement with the Directors of the German bank, by virtue of which German and French capital would in future work together in the construction of railways in Asia Minor, instead of opposing each other on every occasion as in the past.

It is pointed out that financial jealousies have alone retarded the development of the railway system in Asia Minor, and that it is to be hoped that the understanding now come to will be crowned with success.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 93.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 123.)

Foreign Office, May 19, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 239 of the 11th instant, in which you report that the claims for compensation to two British missionaries, Dr. Macallum and Mr. Martin, for arbitrary treatment at the hands of the local authorities in the Province of Aleppo have been allowed by the Turkish Government.

I have learned with satisfaction your Excellency's successful settlement of this case.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 94.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 70. Commercial.)

Constantinople, May 15, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 30, Commercial, of the 25th March, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a further report by the Commercial Attaché to this Embassy on railways in Asia Minor and other Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 94.

Memorandum.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following supplementary details respecting railways in Asia Minor which have been requested by the Director of Military Intelligence in his Memorandum of the 17th March, copy of which is inclosed in the Foreign Office despatch No. 30, Commercial, of the 25th March last.

1. *Oulu-Kishla to Kaiserie.*—Oulu-Kishla is a small village to the east of Eregli, and is the point at which the line from Kaiserie will join the Konia–Adana Railway.

2. *Diner–Sandukla* is a branch the Concession for which has been applied for by the Smyrna–Aidin Railway Company.

3. *Soma–Tchandarlu.*—This is a branch line of the Soma-Edremid Government project, and will pass through Bergama.

4. *Branch from Akka–Damascus, line to Jaffa–Jerusalem.*—The points at which this branch will leave the Akka line and join the Jaffa–Jerusalem Railway have not yet been determined.

5. (*Count Kapnist's Scheme*).—Homs–Aleppo are also included in the French scheme (Rayak–Aleppo–Birejik).

Miyadin is a point on the right bank of the Euphrates, immediately south of the junction of the River Khabour with the Euphrates.

The above details are now shown on the tracing.

6. *Hanlu–Sivas.*—This small branch was originally intended to connect Sivas with the trunk line from Angora–Yozgat on towards Diarbekr and Bagdad. It forms part of the Concession which had been granted to Baron Macar. This Concession was for the construction of the line from Samsoon, Bafra, Sinope, to Sivas, and Baron Macar had also the option of building an extension of this railway from Sivas through Hanlu, Kaiserie, Nigdé, Eregli (or Oulu–Kishla) on to Adana, and then to Yumourtalik.

7. *Tsil to Basrah.*—I fail to trace any such line on the map.

8. *Semakh–Hasbeiya* is a branch of the Akka–Damascus line, and is optional.

9. *Soma-Edremid.*—A Government project.

10. *Angora–Yozgat–Sivas* will be a continuation of the German system (Anatolian Railway) from Angora, and forms part of the Government scheme for a trunk line to Bagdad. The Anatolian Railway Company has preferential rights and surveys between Angora and Sivas were made last autumn.

11. *Kaiserie-Nigdé-Eregli* are the points included in Baron Macar's extension.

12. *Adana Marash direct.*—The Concession for this line has been applied for by the Adana–Mersina Railway Company.

13. *Aleppo–Aintab.*—This line is included in the project for a railway starting from Konia through Adana, Aleppo, and to Bagdad. The Concession has been applied for by a Mr. Cottard (French).

14. *Gaza–Jerusalem.*—A branch of the Jaffa–Jerusalem line. It is optional.

15. *Kifri–Hannekin.*—A branch of the main line from Moussoul. It is one of the Government projects.

There are no applicants for the lines projected by Government beyond those mentioned in this Memorandum.

Constantinople, May 6, 1899.

No. 95.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 246. Confidential.)

Constantinople, May 17, 1899.

My Lord,

IN my despatch No. 238 of the 11th instant I reported the circumstances in which the election of Mgr. Malateos as the new Patriarch of Antioch had been annulled by the Porte as irregular.

Yesterday Mgr. Germanos Apostolatos, representing the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Alexandria called at the Embassy, and, in my absence, was seen by Mr. Barclay.

After expressing his gratitude for the interest shown by the Embassy in the question of the election of the Patriarch, he said he had come to invoke my support for representations which he was about to make to the Grand Vizier and Minister of Justice urging the dispatch of instructions to the local authorities to invite the Holy Synod to proceed at once to hold another election with the proper observance of the prescribed formalities.

Mgr. Apostolatos said the question was a very serious one, and affected not alone the Porte and the Greek Orthodox Church, but England also. All were alike interested in thwarting the Russian intrigues, for, should Russia succeed in obtaining the religious ascendancy for which she was striving in Syria, she would use it to further her political aims.

Mgr. Apostolatos was informed by Mr. Barclay that his request would be communicated to me. I do not, however, think it necessary to reply to the Archbishop's communication, nor, without instructions from your Lordship, do I feel disposed to do more than I have already done in this matter as reported in my despatch No. 139 of the 22nd March last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 96

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 218.)

Constantinople, May 17, 1899.

My Lord,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 176 of the 13th ultimo, in which I forwarded a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora respecting the arrest of certain leading members of the sect known as the Stavrites by the local authorities of Ak Dagh Maden, I now have the honour to transmit copy of a further despatch from Mr. Shipley, reporting the liberation of the greater part of the persons arrested, in consequence of orders from the Grand Vizier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 96.

Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18. Confidential.)

Angora, May 12, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 10 of the 30th March last, and to your Excellency's despatch of the 1st ultimo, on the subject of the persecution by the Ak Dagh Maden authorities of the sect established in that town, known as Stavrites, and the imprisonment of two of the latter named Hadji Isaak and Nikola respectively, I have now the honour to report to your Excellency the release, by order of the Grand Vizier dated the 17th (29th April) last, of the two individuals in question, and their subsequent arrival at Angora on their way to their homes.

As your Excellency will have observed from my despatch in question, the main facts therein reported respecting the arrest of these two persons are substantially the same as those brought to your Excellency's notice by Archbishop Tantalides of the [illegible] Patriarch [illegible] of the 29th March last. I may now add that the explanation of the latter, as furnished to me by Hadji Isaak and Nikola themselves, is that the accusation which was brought against them, and upon which they were arrested by the Turkish authorities, viz., that of converting the other Stavrites from the Mussulman to the Christian religion, was nothing but a pretext, and that they had in reality been the victims of an intrigue on the part of certain subordinate officials at Ak Dagh Maden who had been guilty of peculation and various other corrupt practices, and who hoped by these means to avoid exposure [illegible] great [illegible] Hadji Isaak and Nikola [illegible] dismissal, whether this supposition [illegible] is difficult. In view of the details respecting the history of these Ak Dagh Maden Stavrites, which I had the honour to lay before your Excellency in my despatch above referred to, and which, I [illegible] only tended to confirm, not to believe that the authorities of that district [illegible] the central authority at Constantinople. For instance, one of the [illegible] I was informed by Hadji Isaak and his companion, was most frequently brought [illegible] with them [illegible] it was solely due to their influence that these people were deterred from doing so. But I would venture to submit [illegible] certainly have been expected that the imprisonment [illegible] few conversions from [illegible] contrary has been the case, and that the Stavrites, so far from having been intimidated [illegible] measures adopted towards them by the [illegible] have made the [illegible] stubbornly persisted in declaring themselves Christians, not a single one having responded to the [illegible] to register his children under Mussulman names, although officials were specially sent [illegible] purpose.

[illegible] Excellency [illegible] in my despatch already alluded to, matters were brought to a direct issue between the Stavrites and the Government by the forcible separation from her husband of the [illegible] of a Stavrite [illegible] under the pretext that the marriage was [illegible] into without her consent. [illegible] Hadji [illegible] no [illegible] son to doubt the accuracy of his statement, that the local authorities at Ak Dagh [illegible] procured their authority for the above arbitrary proceeding by representing to [illegible] head-quarters that the Ibrahim in question was a Mussulman properly so called, the fact that he was in reality a member of the Stavrite sect being carefully suppressed. [illegible] further, as showing the great irregularity with which the whole proceedings [illegible] beginning to end been conducted by the Ak Dagh Maden officials, in conjunction with the Mutessarif of Yuzgat, Edib Bey, I may mention that since my previous Report to your Excellency I have had an opportunity of perusing a letter from Priest Kyrillos, written at Yuzgat, to which place it appears he has been summoned by the Mutessarif, and in which he states that the four Stavrites—viz., Eustathius, Lazarus, Sava, and George—whose arrest, it will be in the recollection of your Excellency, followed that of Hadji Isaak and Nikola, had, together with five other Stavrites, been conveyed under escort to the above-mentioned town, where they were being kept, some under detention and some under police surveillance. On learning this I took the opportunity, in a confidential conversation which I had with the Governor-General, Tewfik Pasha, of asking the latter whether the Vizerial order liberating Hadji Isaak and Nikola would also apply to the nine persons above referred to, who, I pointed out to his Excellency, were still under detention at Yuzgat. The latter, though obviously reluctant to discuss the subject, stated, in reply, that he had no knowledge that any such persons were being detained in the manner referred to by me, and on noticing my surprise at receiving this answer, went on to say that, as I was aware, he had been an entire stranger to the whole proceedings, having simply carried out such orders as he had received from time to time from the Ministry of the Interior. In his opinion, however, the Mutessarif of Yuzgat was an injudicious person, and if the fact was as I had stated, he was very willing to transmit to the Ministry at Constantinople any representations which these prisoners might have to make to him. I may add that, under the circumstances, I ventured to take upon myself the responsibility of conveying this intimation of the Governor-General to Hadji Isaak and Nikola before their departure for Yuzgat, *en route* for Ak Dagh Maden, carefully avoiding, of course, any indication of the source from which it came.

In giving the above particulars to your Excellency I should not omit to point out that the refusal of the Stavrites to register their children under any other than Christian names will, if persisted in by the Turkish authorities, result eventually, [illegible] military service, and [illegible] at first sight to present some [illegible] justification for the [illegible] take. [illegible] may [illegible] Hadji Isaak [illegible] of [illegible]

I would beg to [illegible] though on one occasion they were [illegible] subjected to threats and even to [illegible] the officials of the village [illegible] Tchorlu, being suffered to move about [illegible] outside the precincts of the town. [illegible] to the notice of your Excellency [illegible] colleague, M. Pons, and myself, by his Excellency [illegible] under his jurisdiction was scrupulously observed.

I beg to return, herewith, the letter with inclosure of Archbishop Yoanikios.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

P.S.—Since writing the above a report has reached me, the accuracy of which I am, however, unable to vouch, that seven of the nine Stavrites above alluded to have been allowed to return to their homes by the Mutessarif of Yuzgat, the two still remaining under detention being Eustathius and Lazarus.

H. S. S.

No. 97.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 250.)

Constantinople, May 18, 1899.

My Lord,

ON the 27th ultimo I forwarded copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting the capture of the Kurdish Chief Sheref Bey in an affray with the Turkish regular troops near Bashkala.

In a further despatch of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, Captain Maunsell reports that Sheref Bey has now been brought into Van, where he is living as a guest in a private house, the Hamidieh Commandant refusing to allow him to be imprisoned without orders from Zekki Pasha.

Sheref Bey rendered himself notorious by his cruelty at the time of the massacres, and his lawlessness has long been the terror of the Bashkala district, and Captain Maunsell reports that there is a general feeling outside military circles, apparently shared by the Vali himself, that he should be brought to trial and severely punished.

I have endeavoured, through representations which I have made to the Sublime Porte through Mr. Block to give effect to the Vali's views.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 97.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21.)
Van, April 30, 1899.

Sir,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 16, I have the honour to report that Sheref Bey [illegible] Bashkala. He [illegible] a guest in [illegible] private house, and is not considered a prisoner.

The specific charge against him is that of robbing and killing some people in a Persian caravan last summer.

The Hamidieh Commandant here refuses to have him imprisoned unless he gets a special order from Zekki Pasha, who, up to the present, has done nothing in the matter.

The Vali has [illegible] Zekki Pasha, which he knows might be fruitless, and he will probably defer to any military orders that may arrive.

As he [illegible] the subject [illegible], in order that his authority should be supported.

The general feeling here, outside military circles, is that Sheref Bey ought to be tried and severely punished, as he has been a terror to the country-side round Bashkala.

Most military officers have no liking whatever for the Hamidieh, as they are jealous of the titles and distinctions which the latter have won so easily, while they have to serve many years before attaining high rank.

That it should have been possible to seize Sheref Bey at all is a step in advance, and will do something towards showing the Kurds that the Central Government is not to be trifled with.

Other Kurds from whom the sheep-tax has been collected, and who have suffered (been beaten, &c.) in the process, have complained to Zekki Pasha, but so far he has done nothing to help them, and, moreover, the collection of sheep-tax in Jaafer Bey's country is still in progress.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that Zekki Pasha has to some extent modified his position towards the Hamidieh.

The Mutessarif of Bashkala, Mahmud Bey, with Mehmet Pasha, Chief of the Shekak Kurds, and Sheikh Hamid, a prominent Kurdish Sheikh of Bashkala, with some other minor officials, have arrived here also.

The Mutessarif has come to visit and confer with the Vali.

I hear good accounts of this Mutessarif, that he is a strong and capable Governor, and from what I have seen of him he certainly appears to be energetic, and full of promises for the future.

He appears to have settled satisfactorily several disputes with the Persian border Kurds.

Mehmet Pasha is a man who has twice fled into Persia, when this country became too hot to hold him.

Formerly he was in receipt of a pension of 1,000 piastres a-month, when he obtained the title of Pasha; but this was forfeited on his flight.

He returned last summer, and now wishes to make peace with the Turkish Government, and have the pension restored.

I have had the honour of informing your Excellency of the substance of the above by telegraph.

(Signed) P. H. H. MAUNSELL.

No. 98.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 255.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, May 23, 1899.

WITH reference to previous correspondence respecting the rebellion in the Yemen, I venture to trouble your Lordship with the following account of the situation of the Turkish troops which has reached the Embassy from a private source in that province:—

"The news from the interior is very bad, and the Turks are getting the worst of it with the Arabs. The troops that have been sent here are mostly Syrians, great numbers of whom have gone over to the enemy, on account of the terrible treatment they have undergone. The poor fellows have been half starved, and many of them are dying, typhoid being very prevalent. It is said that should this state of things continue there will very soon be no Turkish army in the Yemen.

"The Arabs confine themselves to the mountains and their operations are restricted to worrying the Government troops by sniping and night attacks."

This news is in striking contrast to that appearing in the Turkish journals, which still continue to publish frequent reports of successes gained over the rebels by the Ottoman troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 99.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 257.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, May 23, 1899.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 179 of the 13th ultimo, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that I have again spoken to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in respect to the British claims on account of the Armenian massacres.

I urged Tewfik Pasha to impress upon the Sultan that the time was approaching when I should probably be instructed to bring these claims in a very formal and definite manner before His Majesty, and to insist upon an equitable settlement.

I had frequently mentioned the matter to His Excellency without any result, and as the Sublime Porte seemed to be unable to deal with the subject, I trusted His Excellency would have an early opportunity of informing the Sultan of my repeated representations. I still hoped that the claims would be amicably settled, but if there was no chance of this, I should be obliged to report it to your Lordship.

I added that I did not think it would be agreeable to His Imperial Majesty to be face to face with a proposal for arbitration, strongly supported by Her Majesty's Government and that of another country; its acceptance would involve unpleasant revelations, and its refusal would be followed by further pressure.

Tewfik Pasha said that he would speak to the Sultan's First Secretary in the sense of my remarks, and let me know in due course the results.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 100.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 258.)
My Lord,
Constantinople, May 23, 1899.

I HAVE received the inclosed telegram from Captain Maunsell, who is now at Bitlis in connection with the distribution of relief, reporting disturbances in the neighbourhood of Sassoun.

I have telegraphed to him to use his discretion with regard to proceeding to the disturbed district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 100.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.) *Bitlis, May 20, 1899.*

TEN days ago struggle between revolutionists and regular troops at Zronk [?] in the Moosh plain; revolutionary leader with eight others killed and two prominent officers [illegible] Rifles [illegible] taken from revolutionists. One battalion No II [illegible] employed. Villagers [illegible] during fight but now returned. [illegible] villagers.

No. 101.

[illegible]

(No. [illegible].) [illegible] 5, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 216, Confidential, of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of the correspondence [illegible] the Minister of Finance and the Ottoman Bank respecting [illegible] the [illegible] months of the year.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 101.

Réchad Bey to the Imperial Ottoman Bank.

Le 11 (26) Avril, 1315 (1899).

SUR le rapport du Ministère des Finances et la décision conforme prise en Conseil des Ministres, un Iradé Impérial, communiqué par Tezkéré Grand Viziriel No. 70 en date du 7 (19) Mars, 1315, ordonne ce qui suit :—

"L'excédent des revenus généraux de l'année 1315 des Vilayets de Konia, Castamouni, Sivas, Adana, Angora, Aïdin, et Hudavendighiar, après défalcation des sommes nécessaires au paiement des allocations des troupes Impériales et de la gendarmerie stationnées dans chacun des dits vilayets, des traitements et frais d'administration locale—sera versé aux agences de la Banque Impériale Ottomane à partir de l'année courante et à l'avenir. Seront également défalqués : les revenus des Vilayets d'Angora et de Hudavendighiar, qui sont [illegible]; les £T. 15,000 afférentes à chacun des Vilayets d'Angora et de Konia, lesquelles ont été assignées à la Banque Impériale Ottomane en vertu du contrat en date du 2 (14) Mars, 1315 ; les £T. 27,000 pour lesquelles des délégations ont été émises sur le Vilayet de Hudavendighiar, ainsi que les £T. 15,000 pour lesquelles des délégations ont été délivrées sur le Vilayet d'Aïdin, en vertu du contrat du 1er (13) Février, 1314.

"Toutes les rentrées qui seront effectuées sur les revenus généraux de l'année courante seront versées aux Agences de la Banque Impériale Ottomane établies sur les lieux ou aux Agences les plus proches.

"Aucune délégation sur les revenus susmentionnés ne sera émise à aucun titre et sous aucun prétexte pour n'importe quelle destination.

"Les sommes provenant des dîmes des Vilayets de Konia, Castamouni, Sivas, et Adana affectées à l'indemnité de guerre Russe, seront versées par la Banque Impériale Ottomane au Gouvernement Impérial de Russie aux échéances convenues, et les excédents restants, ainsi que les versements qui lui seront effectués par les Vilayets d'Aïdin, de Hudavendighiar, et d'Angora, seront tenus régulièrement à la disposition du Trésor.

"Le Ministère des Finances nommera et enverra sur les lieux, dans chacun des susdits vilayets, un Inspecteur permanent ayant pour attributions essentielles de surveiller et accélérer les encaissements, d'assurer ainsi le service régulier des paiements et encaissements, et de contrôler les opérations financières générales des susdits vilayets. Ces Inspecteurs seront munis des instructions nécessaires, et investis de pleins pouvoirs."

En conséquence, d'après la teneur de l'Iradé [illegible] les [illegible] Ministère [illegible] la Banque Impériale Ottomane que les [illegible] revenus de [illegible] être portés [illegible] l'indemnité de guerre Russe. Les dîmes, ainsi que les versements qui seront effectués par les Vilayets d'Aïdin, de Hudavendighiar, et d'Angora, seront [illegible].

Nous [illegible] l'état des revenus [illegible] des sept vilayets en question.

[illegible] ront avec les agents de la Banque Impériale Ottomane [illegible].

[illegible] rs ou au Ministère des Finances, seront priées en [illegible].

[illegible] dans les vilayets de Sivas et de Castamouni, à laquelle de vos succursales il conviendrait d'effectuer [illegible].

Le Ministre des Finances,
(Signé) RÉCHAD.

Inclosure 2 in No. 101.

Imperial Ottoman Bank to Réchad Bey.

M. le Ministre, *Constantinople, le 26 Avril, 1899.*

NOUS avons l'honneur d'accuser réception à votre Excellence de sa lettre du 11 (26) Avril, 1315 (1899), en ces termes :—

"Sur le rapport du Ministère des Finances et la décision conforme prise en Conseil des Ministres, un Iradé Impérial, communiqué par Tezkéré Grand Viziriel No. 70 en date du 7 (19) Mars, 1315, ordonne ce qui suit :—

"L'excédent des revenus généraux de l'année 1315 des Vilayets de Konia, Castamouni, Sivas, Adana, Angora, Aïdin, et Hudavendighiar, après défalcation des sommes nécessaires au paiement des allocations des troupes Impériales et de la gendarmerie stationnées dans chacun des dits vilayets, des traitements et frais d'administration locale—sera versé aux agences de la Banque Impériale Ottomane à partir de l'année courante et à l'avenir. Seront également défalqués : les revenus des Vilayets d'Angora, d'Aïdin, et de Hudavendighiar qui sont déjà affectés par contrats ; les £T. 15,000 afférentes à chacun des vilayets d'Angora et de Konia, lesquelles ont été assignées à la Banque Impériale Ottomane en vertu du contrat en date du 2 (14) Mars, 1315 ; les £T. 27,000 pour lesquelles des délégations ont été émises sur le Vilayet de Hudavendighiar, ainsi que les £T. 15,000 pour lesquelles des délégations ont été délivrées sur le Vilayet d'Aïdin, en vertu du contrat du 1er (13) Février, 1314.

"Toutes les rentrées qui seront effectuées sur les revenus généraux de l'année courante seront versées aux Agences de la Banque Impériale Ottomane établies sur les lieux ou aux Agences les plus proches.

"Aucune délégation sur les revenus susmentionnés ne sera émise à aucun titre et sous aucun prétexte pour n'importe quelle destination.

"Les sommes provenant des dîmes des Vilayets de Konia, Castamouni, Sivas, et Adana, affectées à l'indemnité de guerre Russe, seront versées par la Banque Impériale

Ottomane au Gouvernement Impérial de Russie aux échéances convenues, et les excédents restants, ainsi que les versements qui lui seront effectués par les Vilayets d'Aïdin, de Hudavendighiar, et d'Angora, seront tenus régulièrement à la disposition du Trésor.

"Le Ministère des Finances nommera et enverra sur les lieux, dans chacun des susdits vilayets, un Inspecteur [illegible] ayant pour attributions essentielles de [illegible] et accélérer le [illegible] des paiements et encaissements, et de contrôler les opérations financières générales des susdits vilayets. Ces Inspecteurs seront munis des instructions nécessaires et investis de pleins pouvoirs."

"En conséquence, d'après la teneur de l'Iradé Impérial sanctionnant les décisions qui [illegible] que les versements qui seront effectués sur les revenus des dîmes de l'année courante dans les quatre vilayets sus-énoncés affectés à l'Indemnité de guerre Russe en vertu de la Convention Spéciale [illegible] Indemnité de Guerre [illegible] les revenus généraux [illegible], de Hudavendighiar, et d'Angora devront être tenus à la disposition du Trésor.

[illegible] revenus, des dépenses, et des affectations [illegible].

"Les Inspecteurs qui seront délégués par le Ministère des Finances [illegible] en relations suivies et se concerteront avec les agents de la Banque Impériale Ottomane en vue d'assurer, dans l'intérêt du Trésor, le contrôle pour la bonne marche des [illegible] vilayets indiqués.

[illegible] de la Banque Impériale Ottomane, [illegible] des Finances, seront pris en considération.

"Nous vous prions donc de nous faire savoir que la Banque Impériale Ottomane [illegible] d'un Iradé Impérial [illegible] de la Banque dans les Vilayets de Sivas et de Castamouni, à laquelle de vos succursales [illegible]."

Nous [illegible] est prête à se charger des services ci-dessus spécifiés.

La Banque Impériale Ottomane [illegible] pour le paiement régulier de l'annuité de £ T. 350,000 [illegible] de guerre Russe; elle ne peut être recherchée sous aucun prétexte à raison d'irrégularités quelconques dans la perception des impôts; elle [illegible] que pour les sommes encaissées par elle en vertu des [illegible].

Il est cependant important pour la bonne marche de ces services que la Banque Impériale Ottomane ait une agence dans chacun des vilayets indiqués, et nous venons informer votre Excellence que nous procéderons, dans le plus bref délai, à l'ouverture d'une agence à Sivas et d'une agence à Castembol, dans des conditions à régler avec elle.

Nous prions votre Excellence de nous confirmer son accord sur ce dernier point, qui est essentiel pour la bonne marche du service.

Veuillez, &c.
Le Directeur-General,
(Signé) R. HAMILTON LANG.
Le Directeur,
(Signé) GUST. WULFING.

Inclosure 3 in No. 101.

Imperial Ottoman Bank to Réchad Bey.

M. le Ministre, *Constantinople, le 26 Avril, 1899.*

DANS la lettre que votre Excellence [illegible] l'honneur de nous adresser aujourd'hui, nous remarquons deux passages [illegible] exclusivement mention de "l'année courante" sans [illegible].

Afin d'éviter tout malentendu dans l'avenir et de mettre notre responsabilité à couvert, nous venons prier votre Excellence de vouloir bien nous donner quelques explications complémentaires.

Veuillez, &c.
Le Directeur-Général,
(Signé) R. HAMILTON LANG.
Le Sous-Directeur,
(Signé) CH. DE CERJAT.

Inclosure 4 in No. 101.

Rechad Bey to Imperial Ottoman Bank.

Le 15 (27) *Avril*, 1315 (1899).

NOUS avons reçu votre lettre du 14 (26) Avril.

En réponse, nous vous informons que la décision communiquée par notre Tezkéré du 14 (26) Avril, 1315 (1899), ne se rapporte pas seulement à l'année courante.

Ainsi qu'il est indiqué dans le susdit Tezkéré, il est convenu qu'à partir de l'annee courante et à l'avenir aussi, il sera opéré de la manière indiquée.

Si dans les deux autres passages du Tezkéré il a été fait mention de l'année courante seulement, c'est dans le but d'établir une exception pour les encaissements des années passées.

Le Ministre des Finances,
(Signé) RÉCHAD.

Inclosure 5 in No. 101.

Revenus et Dépenses de Sept Vilayets.

COMPARISON entre les Chiffres du Bureau de Statistique et ceux du Ministère des Finances.

	Source Statistique	Source Finances.
	£ T.	£ T.
1. Revenue.		
Aidin	1,017,085	973,941
Brousse	827,277	806,865
Angora	[illegible]	433,100
Konia	482,551	492,127
Castamouni	316,845	311,650
Sivas	382,311	315,720
Adana	217,853	199,642
Total	3,699,161	3,533,345
2. Dépenses		
Aidin	702,338	619,960
Brousse	690,367	640,529
Angora	326,000	360,520
Konia	251,000	164,886
Castamouni	190,000	143,408
Sivas	187,000	175,712
Adana	108,000	126,023
Total	[illegible]	[illegible]
3. Excédents.		
Aidin	[illegible]	[illegible]
Brousse	[illegible]	[illegible]
Angora	[illegible]	72,580
Konia	[illegible]	327,241
Castamouni	[illegible]	168,242
Sivas	[illegible]	110,007
Adana	[illegible]	73,619
Total	[illegible]	[illegible]

N.B.—Les chiffres du Bureau de Statistique [illegible] Exercice financier de 13[illegible] 12 [illegible] Castamouni ont été [illegible] Mal.

Inclosure 6 in No. 101.

REVENU des Dîmes de l'Empire Ottoman et leurs Affectations.

Vilayets.			Revenus des Dîmes.	Montant des Affectations.	Disponible.
			£ T.	£ T.	£ T.
Turquie d'Europe.					
Constantinople [illegible]	..		[illegible]	..	[illegible]
Andrinople	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Salonique ..	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Tchataldja ..	..		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Monastir ..	..	..		[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Kossovo ..	..		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Scutari d'Albanie	..	..	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible] ..		..		30,000	
			[illegible]	[illegible]	
Turquie d'Asie.					
Ad[illegible]	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	.	.	22,671	[illegible]	[illegible]
Alep ..			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	.	.	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	.	..	[illegible]	10,000	
[illegible] ..	.	.	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	.	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	.	..	[illegible]	..	[illegible]
Beyrouth ..	.	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	..	..	[illegible]	..	[illegible]
[illegible]	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	..	..	[illegible]	..	[illegible]
[illegible]	.	..	[illegible]	..	[illegible]
[illegible]	..	.	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	..
Jérusalem .	..	..	[illegible]	2,000	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]-ul-Aziz	..	..	[illegible]	25,000	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	..	..	61,578	..	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	.	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	..	.	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible] (Liban)	..	.	18,151	..	[illegible]
[illegible]	..	.	[illegible]	..	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	..	.	[illegible]	..	[illegible]
[illegible] ..	..	..	[illegible]	..	[illegible]
			3,190,517	1,553,855	[illegible]
Total général	..	..	4,179,221	1,971,855	2,207,[illegible]

Observations.

[illegible] triques des chemins de fer [illegible] le rende- [illegible] qui est porté sur le présent [illegible]

[illegible] de £ T. [illegible] de l'indem- [illegible] prennent la majoration de 20 pour cent, c'est-à-dire [illegible] £ T. [illegible]. Celles pour [illegible] destinée au rembours ment des arriérés, n'ont pas de [illegible]

Il n'a été porté pour la Dette [illegible] sur dîmes représentant des [illegible] d'un caractère à peu près [illegible]

AFFECTATIONS par Service et Excédents ou Déficits des Affectations.

[illegible]	Affectations sur les Vilayets de—			Sommes affectées.	Total des Affectations par Service.	Total des Affectations par Catégorie.	[illegible]	[illegible]	Observations.
				£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	
I.—[illegible]									
[illegible] Constantinople	Andrinople Salonique	.. ..	.. ..	[illegible] [illegible]	158,000		[illegible]	[illegible]	Ce [illegible] de l'excédent de Salonique-Monastir, qui s'élève d'après chiffre ci-bas à £ T. 158,000.
[illegible] ..	Salonique Monastir	.. ..	.. ..	116,000 74,000	190,000		[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	Angora Hudavendighiar Ismidt Trébizonde	.. ..	.. ..	50,000 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible] ..	Adana	..	..	177,[illegible]	177,[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible] ..	Beyrouth Syrie	.. ..	.. ..	46,000 54,000	100,000		[illegible]	[illegible]	
					925,[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
II.—[illegible]									
[illegible] ..	Adana		..	[illegible]	[illegible]			..	[illegible] affectations sur d'autres [illegible] £ T. 115,000.
[illegible] ..	Angora Hudavendighiar	.. ..	.. ..	[illegible] 162,[illegible]	231,000		[illegible]		[illegible] de £ T. 80,000 [illegible] annuité est de £ T. 250,000.
[illegible] 18[illegible]	Brousse Adana Hudavendighiar	.. .. ..	.. .. ..	10,000 10,000 30,000	50,000		[illegible]		[illegible] affectations pour £ T. 120,000 [illegible] annuité est de £ T. 180,000.
					341,000	341,000	280,000	[illegible]	

[illegible]		Affectation par Vilayets.	Sommes affectées.	Total des Affectations de la Série.	Total des Affectations par Catégorie.	Montant nécessaire pour le Service.	Excédent des Affectations.	Observations.
			£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	
1	[illegible] de Guerre Russe	Adana	70,000			56,000	14,000	L'Indemnité de guerre Russe a aussi une affectation de £ T. 40,000 [illegible] de £ T. 32,000 sur [illegible] d'Alep. Son annuité est [illegible] £ T. [illegible], dont £ T. 100,000 pour les [illegible]. [illegible] les dîmes [illegible] d'Alep et de Mamouret-ul-Aziz pour £ T. 75,000 et £ T. 25,000 respectivement.
		Alep	75,000			75,000	..	
		Castamouni	110,000			88,000	22,000	
		Konia	138,000			110,000	28,000	
		Mamouret-ul-Aziz	25,000			25,000	..	
		Sivas	79,500			64,000	15,500	
				497,500	497,500	418,000	79,500	
	—Dette Flottante	Tchataldja	5,000					
		Monastir	20,000					
		Janina	25,000					
		Cossovo	10,000					
		Adana	60,000					
		Alep	20,000					
		Archipel	10,000					
		Bagdad	5,000					
		Bassorah	5,000					
		Jérusalem	25,000					
		Syrie	5,000					
		Trébizonde	20,000					
				210,000	210,000	210,000	..	
		Total général	..	..	1,971,855	1,668,000	303,855	

Note sur les Chemins de Fer.

L'évaluation de la somme nécessaire pour le service des garanties a été faite sur la base des recettes de l'Exercice 1898 [illegible] considérée comme une année moyenne, le déficit [illegible] ont été compensé [illegible] transports militaires. [illegible] Tableau [illegible] rendement en 1311 des dîmes des vilayets [illegible] [illegible] prix des produits [illegible] [illegible] comme moyen [illegible]

[illegible] sont indiqués par les chiffres en italique.

DÉTAIL des Affectations sur les Dîmes.

Vilayets.			Garanties Chemins de Fer.	Emprunts.	Indemnité de Guerre Russe.	Dette Flottante.	Total.	Observations.
			£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	
Turquie d'Europe.								
Constantinople et Banlieue	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Andrinople ..	..	..	68,000	..	..	..	68,000	Jonction Salonique-Constantinople.
Salonique	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	..	..	206,000	Chemin de Fer Salonique-Monastir, £ T. 116,000 Chemin de fer jonction Salonique-Constantinople, £ T. 90,000
Tchataldja ..	..	..	..	..	..	5,000	5,000	
Monastir ..	..	..	74,000	..	..	20,000	94,000	Chemin de Fer Salonique-Monastir.
Janina	..	..	..	..	..	25,000	25,000	
Cossovo ..	..	..	..	..	..	10,000	10,000	
Scutari d'Albanie	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Iles (D[illegible])	..	..	..	10,000	..	..	10,000	Emprunt 5 pour Cent, 1896.
			318,000	[illegible]	..	60,000	418,000	
Turquie d'Asie.								
A[illegible]	..	..	..	..	70,000	..	70,[illegible]	
A[illegible]	..	..	77,000	[illegible]	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	Chemin de Fer Cassaba— Emprunt Osmanié, £ T. [illegible] Emprunt 5 pour Cent, 1896, £ T. 40,000.
[illegible]	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	..	..	119,000	Chemin de Fer Haidar-Pacha-Angora, et Emprunt Osmanié.
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	[illegible]	20,000	[illegible]	
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..	[illegible]	[illegible]	
Archipel	..	..	..	..	..	5,000	5,000	
Bagdad	..	..	..	..	..	5,000	5,000	
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
[illegible]	..	..	46,000	..	..	..	46,000	Chemin de Fer [illegible]-Birédjik.
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	110,000	..	110,000	
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
[illegible]	..	..	130,000	192,000	..	..	322,000	Chemin de Fer Haidar Pacha-Angora— Emprunt Osmanié, £ T. 162,000. Emprunt 5 pour Cent, 1896, £ T. 30,000.
[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..	..	[illegible]	Chemin de Fer Haidar-Pacha-Angora.
Total [illegible]	..	..	[illegible]	..	..	..		

No. 192.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 264. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May 25, 1899.*

WITH reference to the question asked in the House of Commons on the 15th instant, respecting the detention of certain Armenian ecclesiastics in the Monastery of St. James at Jerusalem, I have the honour to transmit herewith a Memorandum containing information privately supplied to me by the Armenian Patriarch.

The ecclesiastics to whom the question referred are evidently the ex-Patriarch [illegible] and Kh[illegible], the Bishops of Erzeroum and Moush respectively, who were removed to the Monastery of St. James after the troubles of 1896, where they have since been detained.

There is no reason to suppose that these high ecclesiastical dignitaries are subjected to any special treatment apart from the punishment of not being allowed to leave their present place of residence, and I understand that an annual stipend is paid to them by [illegible] Armenian [illegible].

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 192.

Memorandum.

THE [illegible] of Moush.

[illegible]zmirlian was "forced to go to Jerusalem of his own accord" (to use Mgr. Ormanian's expression) in the summer of 1896. His Beatitude has several times taken steps for his recall unofficially, himself offering to be surety for his good behaviour, but the authorities seemed anxious that the ex-Patriarch should not have an opportunity of causing trouble to the reigning Patriarch; such was the reason given.

Shishmanian was neither tried nor condemned. After the troubles at Erzeroum he was imprisoned, and was then escorted to Constantinople, where he remained at the Patriarchate till he was forcibly removed to the Monastery of Jerusalem in the summer of 1896, shortly before Ismirlian.

Karakhanian was tried at Bitlis and condemned to close confinement in 1892. In 1895 he was liberated, and coming to Constantinople performed his duties in the Church till the end of 1896, when he, too, was exiled.

When the amnesty was declared in December 189[illegible] the Patriarch applied officially on behalf of the two last that they should be allowed to return in accordance with the terms of the amnesty; but though one Bishop, one Archimandrite, and two Archpriests who had been condemned to death were pardoned entirely, they refused to recall Shishmanian and Karakhanian, merely saying that it would be better for them to stay there.

The Bishops are allowed the same liberty as the other inmates of the Monastery, but frequently write to complain to Mgr. Ormanian, especially Karakhanian, who is ill.

(Signed) G. W. Y. PRENDERGAST.

Constantinople, May 24, 1899.

No. 193.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 266.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May 25, 1899.*

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 238 and 246 of the 11th and 17th instant respectively, regarding the irregular election of Mgr. Melateos to the Patriarchate of Antioch, I have the honour to report that it was decided yesterday, by the Council of

Ministers, that a fresh election should be held forthwith, with the proper observance of the prescribed forms.

I learn this morning, from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, that orders have been received for the reinstatement as *locum tenens* in the Patriarchate of Mgr. Germanos, whose removal from this post I reported in my despatch No. 139 of the 22nd March last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 104.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. [illegible]) [illegible] May 31, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 211 of the 11th instant on the subject [illegible] proceedings of the local authorities.

I approve your action in directing Mr. Jones to proceed to the disturbed district, and in joining the French Ambassador in unofficial representation to the Porte with regard to the proceedings threatened against the British and French Consular [illegible]

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 105.

Sir N. O'Conor to the M[illegible].—(Received [illegible].)

(No. 26[illegible].) *Constantinople, May 27, 1899.*

My Lord,

WITH [illegible] despatches No. 176 of the 13th April, and No. 248 of the 17th [illegible] and subsequent liberation of [illegible] the "Stavrites" at Ak Dagh Maden, I now have the honour to forward [illegible] copy of a communication from the Œcumenical Patriarchate, thanking me for my action in this matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 105.

The Œcumenical Patriarch to Sir N. O'Conor.

Phanar, le 11 (23) *Mai*, 1899.

L'AMBASSADE [illegible] Sa Majesté [illegible] a bien voulu, par une lettre du Secrétariat, en date du 2[illegible] annoncer au Patriarcat Œcuménique la mise en liberté des Chrétiens d'Ak Dagh qui étaient exilés ou emprisonnés.

Cette heureuse nouvelle [illegible] reçues au Patriarcat il y a déjà une semaine provoque de [illegible] et une reconnaissance profonde que le Patriarcat Œcuménique doit à son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur pour les sentiments humanitaires qu'il a bien voulu témoigner à cette triste occasion.

No. 106.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 5.)

(No. 275.) *Constantinople, May 29, 1899.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 257 of the 23rd instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a letter which I have received

from Messrs. Macnamara and Bond, inclosing a Petition from certain British merchants of this city, begging that their claims for losses during the massacres of August 1896 may be pressed on the Ottoman Government; together with copy of my reply to this communication.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 106.

Messrs. Macnamara and Bond to Sir N. O'Conor.

Kutchuk Tunnel Han, Galata, May 25, 1899.

Sir,

WE, the undersigned delegates of the British sufferers by pillage during the Constantinople massacres of August 1896, have the honour to hand to your Excellency the accompanying Petition from the British victims in reference to their claims for indemnity on the Imperial Ottoman Government.

We have, &c.
(Signed) J. F. MACNAMARA.
RICHD. M. BOND.

Inclosure 2 in No. 106.

Messrs. Ridley and Co. and others to Sir N. O'Conor.

Galata, May 22, 1899.

Sir,

WE, the undersigned members of the British colony of Constantinople, and victims of the pillage during the Constantinople massacres of August 1896, respectfully beg to call your Excellency's attention to the matter of our claims on the Imperial Ottoman Government for compensation on account of the losses so sustained by us.

As far back as the 28th March, 1898, we were informed by his Excellency Sir P. Currie that he had on the 24th March, 1898, addressed a note to the Sublime Porte pressing for immediate payment of these claims from moneys coming into the Ottoman Treasury from the Greek war indemnity. Again, on the 14th November, 1898, we understand your Excellency addressed a further note to the Sublime Porte on the matter. We have since heard, on what seems to be reliable authority, that the Turkish Government has not returned replies to these notes; also that a Report approved by the legal Councillor of the Porte on the matter was drawn up last year by the Council of State and sent to the Palace, with a recommendation to the Sultan for the payment of these claims; also that the United States' Minister subsequently obtained from the Sultan a promise that the American claims would be paid; also that the Turkish Government proposes to pay the American claims in connection with and through certain American contractors with whom they are in negotiation for naval contracts.

We therefore most respectfully beg to draw your Excellency's attention to th above. We beg to state that the financial strain on some of our number i intolerable. Some of them are daily losing business and business connections. Business passes from them to Germans and other competitors, in consequence of their having to pay a heavy rate of interest for financial accommodation to keep on their business.

It is the general conviction of the British residents that the Turkish Government will only pay these claims, which are now nearly three years old, when Her Majesty's Government enforces its demands by pressure.

We therefore earnestly pray that your Excellency will once more call th attention of Her Majesty's Government to the critical position of most of th claimants, and ask that an immediate settlement of these claims be insisted on forthwith.

At the same time, we beg most especially your Excellency to kindly inform u if any reply, favourable or otherwise, has been given to your Excellency's note o. November last, as also as to what is the present position of our claims.

We have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY RIDLEY AND Co.
(And 17 others.)

Inclosure 3 in No. 106.

Sir N. O'Conor to Messrs. Macnamara and Bond.

Constantinople, May 27, 1899.

Gentlemen,

IN reply to your letter and its inclosures of the 25th instant, I have to inform you that last week I again [illegible] the [illegible] claims on account of the Armenian massacres to the earnest [illegible] Imperial Government.

I regret that for the moment I am [illegible], but the question is kept in view, and that no opportunity will be lost of bringing it to a settlement.

I am, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 107.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 5.)

(No. 276.)

Constantinople, May [illegible], 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 187 of the 18th ultimo I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut, inclosing a Memorandum by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Haifa, on the ravages of locusts at that place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 107.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 35.)

Beirut, May 15, 1899.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 28 of the 10th instant, reporting the appearance of locusts in Syria I have the honour to transmit herewith, inclosed to your Excellency, a report by Mr. Monahan, Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul at Haifa, on the same subject.

The measures taken by the local authorities for the destruction of the locusts have not been very effectual. I have furnished the Governor-General of the Lebanon with a copy of my Report on the methods adopted in Tunis for destroying them, as well as with information on the subject, which the High Commissioner in Cyprus has kindly furnished me. Naoum Pasha is examining the methods employed in Tunis and Cyprus, and proposes to adopt them, as far as he is able, in this country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 107.

Memorandum respecting the Appearance of Locusts at Haifa in 1899.

LOCUSTS appeared in the early part of the year in the Hauran, of which nearly one-eighth of the grain district is here reported to be in danger.

About the same time they passed into the Caza of Tiberias, of which they, however, visited only a small part. It is said to be twenty years since they last appeared in this Vice-Consular district, which includes Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, and Tiberias, though their appearance in the Hauran is more frequent. They also passed into the Caza of Safed, where they are said to threaten considerable damage. They are said to have been seen near Acre, but no serious results seem to be apprehended in that neighbourhood. The locusts appeared as flying locusts, in which state they do no damage. They, however, left eggs, from which the creeping or devastating locusts have now appeared, but, so far as this Vice-Consular district is concerned, it is only in the lands of a few villagers in Tiberias Caza. It has not been thought necessary to take any special measures for their destruction in that caza or any part of this Vice-Consular district, but in Safed, as I am informed, the Government has had trenches made into which the creeping locusts fall, and are there burnt.

Gendarmes have been sent from Haifa and other cazas to force the peasants to make these trenches.

(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

May 12, 1899.

P.S. *May* 13, 1899.—I have to-day received from a trustworthy correspondent at Tiberias the following information:—

"Both here and in Safed the Government are taking energetic measures to destroy the locusts, but I fear the efforts are not very sustained. They are forcing the inhabitants to go to the infected regions and destroy them by various methods, *e.g.*, getting them in sacks and burying them, and then trampling on them, smashing them with oleander branches, burning them with petroleum oil when settled on trees, &c. I hear, too, that when, say, a dozen boxes of oil are bought for this purpose, probably only one-half [illegible]."

J. H. M.

No. 108.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 5.)

(No. 277. Confidential.)

Constantinople, May 31, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of an interesting report which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, relative to the condition of that vilayet.

The account given by Mr. Barnham of the improvements effected by the Vali since his appointment proves him to be a most energetic and capable Administrator, and shows how much may be done in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire by officials of his type.

Mr. Barnham, in common with Her Majesty's other Consular officers in Syria and Palestine, dwells on the progress of Russian religious and educational influence in the native Orthodox community, and on the efforts of the Russian officials to attain this end.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 108.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 17. Confidential.)

Alexandretta, *May* 21, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to submit to your Excellency a few observations upon the government and general condition of the Vilayet of Aleppo.

The vilayet at present comprises the three sandjaks of Aleppo, Ourfa, and Marash, but it has been decided to form a fourth sandjak, having its seat of government at Antioch, and including the Cazas of Antioch, Jissr-Shogl, Suedia, and Alexandretta.

In connection with this change, Suedia, hitherto a Mudirlik, becomes a caza, while the Caza of Beilan (a town 8 miles from Alexandretta) becomes a Mudirlik within the Caza of Alexandretta.

The reasons which call for the formation of this new sandjak are the great distance of Antioch from Aleppo (100 miles), and the necessity of having a strong Administration in a district which is occupied by many different races, and notably by one—the Nooseriyeh—which gives a great deal of trouble.

Within the new sandjak are the mountain ranges of Jebel Acra, Jebel Moussa, and the Amanus, and as, during the late political disturbances, these mountains formed the meeting ground of Armenian agitators, so to-day they are the resort of brigands who prey upon the Armenian villages which lie scattered over the district, and who commonly belong to that strange sect known as the Nooseriyeh.

Besides the creation of the new Sandjak of Antioch, a new caza is to be formed within the Sandjak of Aleppo.

It will have the seat of government at Hammamat, a place frequented for its sulphur springs, situated about 40 miles from Aleppo, between that city and Alexandretta.

It will include a section of the so-called Amook plain, and have under its control a large number of Kurdish and Circassian villages whose inhabitants are much addicted to petty plundering. The Vali hopes that these arrangements will be carried into effect in the autumn.

Speaking generally, the Mutessarifs and Kaimakams who have been appointed to the vilayet since Raouf Pasha came to Aleppo compare favourably with those who were in office before his time as regards their personal character and capacity, and the Vali keeps a tight hold upon them, calling them up frequently to head-quarters to instruct or reprimand.

Whatever may be the character of the civil and judicial staff, it is clear that the integrity of the Vali himself has had a deterrent effect upon them, for we rarely hear of a public scandal caused by extensive bribery. There have been two cases the details of which have not been made public, and both officials concerned have been removed.

The growing poverty of the fellaheen was very noticeable during last winter and spring, for it was accentuated by short harvest and cattle plague. The export of wool and grain, which are the most valuable products of the district, are insignificant, and, the absence of capital preventing the employment of labour, many left Aleppo for Beirout and Egypt in search of a living.

I am, however, glad to report that during the spring abundant rain has fallen, and a harvest is assured richer than any gathered for many years past, while cattle disease has entirely disappeared both from the Vilayet of Aleppo and from that of Adana.

The taxes have meantime been collected, and a large amount of arrears paid in, but I have not heard that the collection was carried on with undue rigour. Officials have been paid with greater regularity, and no money, though frequently demanded, has been sent to Constantinople, so that the Vali has at present a large balance on hand, which he is devoting to public works.

Of these I must mention three, in which his Excellency takes great interest, and which will be of lasting benefit:—

1. The old city of Aleppo probably presents very much the same aspect to-day as it did 500 years ago, and, from the nature of things, is incapable of change unless it were thrown down by an earthquake. Its houses are massive and prison-like, its streets narrow and shut in by high walls, dark, ill paved, and it is impossible to widen them owing to the want of money for expropriating the owners of houses.

The Vali, therefore, encourages the development of the suburbs of Djemilié, Azizié, and Hamidié, where streets, varying in width from 30 to 40 feet, have been laid out with pavements, boulevards, and other embellishments, which will soon make Aleppo the handsomest town in the interior. Quarries of excellent white stone and yellow marble exist close to the city.

Thirty years ago, when Raif Pasha, our present Vali, was on the staff of Midhat Pasha, Vali of Bagdad, he passed through Alexandretta, which he recalls as a townlet of 2,000 inhabitants, who lived in huts erected on piles at a great distance from the ground, to escape from the miasma of the surrounding swamp. To-day the population is nearly 14,000, the old huts have entirely disappeared, the sea front is occupied by a long line of handsome stone houses and offices, while the streets have been properly laid out and paved.

A Commission, of which Vice-Consul Catoni is an active member, was appointed last year to superintend the drainage of the marshes, and the work is progressing steadily.

Lastly, preparations are being made for the construction of a break-water at Alexandretta.

The present carriage road from Aleppo to the coast was inaugurated fourteen years ago by the late Djemil Pasha.

Instead of following the old caravan track, which had no difficult gradients, it was made to take a circuitous course to the north, for no apparent reason except to increase the profit of the engineer, the entire length being 157 kilom.

The Vali is now making a new road, viâ Turmeneen (the old caravan route), which will merge into the present road at the Afreen River.

The last section of the road—that over the Beilan Pass—will also be reconstructed, so that the journey to the coast will altogether be shortened by something like 50 kilom., and it will be possible, by obtaining a relay of horses at Hammamat, to reach Alexandretta in one day.

At the present moment the Vali is absent on a tour of inspection, visiting in succession Alexandretta, Antioch, Suedia, and Killis, and he has handed over the charge of affairs at Aleppo to the Commandant, Lieutenant-General Bekir Pasha.

The reasons which have induced his Excellency to hand over his duties to a military man rather than to the Defterdar or Mektubji are worth noting. It was a choice based, not on the special fitness of Bekir Pasha, but was made a measure of self-defence—a manœuvre to insure that everything should go on well during his absence, but that if anything untoward should happen, the blame should fall on the military party.

I had occasion to report how last summer, two days after the Vali left for Alexandretta, Ali Mohsin Pasha, the Commander-in-chief, deliberately provoked a bread riot in Aleppo with the object of discrediting the Vali, and, if possible, obtaining his recall.

It was by precisely such means that, in 1879, Djemil Pasha, the Commandant, succeeded in ousting Saïd Pasha from the vilayet, and obtaining his post.

It failed in this case, but the ignoble persecution has been continued ever since, by latent attack, or by open accusations telegraphed by Ali Mohsin Pasha to the Palace.

The Vali has twice sent in his resignation, but while it has not been accepted, he has received no satisfaction for the repeated calumnies of which he has been the victim.

Ali Mohsin Pasha is unworthy of his high command, and I certainly think it would be for the public good if he were appointed elsewhere; for, should Raouf Pasha leave Aleppo, not only will his work of progress come to an end, but we run the risk of seeing a Vali appointed in his place who will wink at, or share in, the dishonesty of Ali Pasha.

I must here refer to the Bedouin Arabs, and their recent flight from Syria, for which I think Ali Pasha was largely responsible.

When Djemil Pasha was Vali of Aleppo, Ali Mohsin Pasha, at that time Colonel Ali Bey, held the appointment of Commander of the Desert, and in that capacity enriched himself at the expense of the Arabs, sharing the plunder with Djemil Pasha. Now the appointment is held by his subordinate, Mehemet Pasha, from whom he collects his half share.

It is in consequence of the exceptionally harsh treatment of the Aniza Arabs last year that they were driven to migrate to the south this spring.

Nothing further has been heard of them since they left, for they have eluded all pursuit. Ali Pasha told me that the loss of revenue resulting herefrom was £ T. 10,000, but whether this represents the average amount paid into the public account, or includes his own share, and that of his subordinate, I cannot say. At any rate, only a portion of the Aniza Arabs has migrated.

I have now to report to your Excellency a matter of some importance.

On arrival at Alexandretta I found that a Russian iron-clad, the "Alexander II," having on board Admiral Skrydloff and the Russian Consul-General at Beirout, had called and left, after announcing her intention of returning a week later, when the Admiral and Consul-General would proceed to Aleppo.

Your Excellency has probably been informed of the election at Damascus of Melitios, a Syrian Greek, as Titular Patriarch of Antioch.

It appears that the new Patriarch is in the pay of the Russian Government, which is making great efforts, with his support, to secure the introduction of the Russian language into the schools of the Orthodox Church.

I understand that the movement has met with great success in the Lebanon, at Beirout, and at Tripoli.

The "Alexander II" has been to Mersyna in my district, and there—as elsewhere—the Admiral and Consul-General landed and attended Mass in the Syrian Greek Church, receiving at the same time an address from the community, dictated to them by the Russian Consulate Dragoman, asking for the establishment of a Russian school at Mersyna.

With such absence of concealment have these steps been taken that it would seem that the Turkish Government is aware of what is going on.

As the Greek Bishop of Aleppo is supposed to have been approached on the subject, and to have refused to countenance the movement, the impending journey of the Admiral and Consul-General will, it is supposed, be undertaken with the object of winning him over.

The Greek population of Aleppo is about 3,000, that at Antioch and Suedia, together, about 4,000.

The Power which would naturally be the first to resent this movement is France, which has, by her numerous monastic and scholastic institutions, sought to make her influence paramount in Syria, but she is tied by her alliance with Russia, which seems to be allowed a free hand in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 109.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 137.)
Foreign Office, June 5, 1899.
Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 257 of the 23rd ultimo, reporting a conversation which your Excellency had with Tewfik Pasha on the subject of the British claims arising out of the Armenian massacres.

I approve the language which you held to his Excellency on that occasion.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 110.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 289.)
Constantinople, June 6, 1899.
My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 266 of the 25th ultimo.

I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting that the newly elected Orthodox Patriarch is to be deposed and a new election held.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 110.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 34.)
Damascus, May 25, 1899.
Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram of yesterday's date reporting the orders received by the Vali to depose the Greek Patriarch Elect (Mgr. Melateos) and to reinstate Mgr. Germanos as *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate previously to the holding of a new election, I am informed by Nazim Pasha that he is awaiting the return to Damascus of some of the Bishops who happen to be away just at present, before proceeding to carry out the orders he has received. This being so it is difficult to gauge as yet the effect which the news when generally known will have on the Greek Syrian party, but I shall be surprised if the order be quietly submitted to. They are, however, much less confident of success than they were formerly.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 111.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 290.)
Constantinople, June 6, 1899.
My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 186 of the 18th April last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the result of a further punitive expedition against the Bedouin of the Tel-es-Safa.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 111.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 35.)
Damascus, May 26, 1899.
Sir,

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 19 and 9 of the 4th April and 27th February respectively, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that Husrev Pasha who some ten days or so ago was dispatched a second time against the marauding Bedouin tribes of the Tel-es-Safa has just returned, his expedition having proved in one sense a complete success. According to the official version it would appear that the Pasha's force, which consisted of 100 mounted zaptiehs only—all of whom, however, were picked men—came into regular conflict with the Bedouins, of whom they killed twenty and wounded forty more, their own losses being confined to two killed, one sergeant and one corporal.

Husrev Pasha is said to have recovered from the Arabs 4,000 sheep and 215 camels. A private version, however, of what actually took place, which has reached me from a reliable source, gives a very different complexion to the affair. I am told that Husrev Pasha and his men had the good fortune to surprise a small party of Bedouin shepherds, twelve in number, who, together with the Sheikh, were guarding the flocks of the tribe, the members of which were away on a "ghazu" or foray some 40 miles off. The zaptiehs appear to have pursued and shot down the shepherds, all of whom, together with the Sheikh, were killed, not, however, before they on their part had succeeded in killing one sergeant and one corporal. The zaptiehs then collected all the sheep and camels which they could find, viz., 3,000 of the former and 200 of the latter, and proceeded to bring them back to Damascus. As a matter of fact, however, I hear that only 1,200 sheep actually reached the city, the remainder having been previously disposed of in various ways.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 112.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 291.)

Constantinople, June 6, 1899.

My Lord,

IN my despatch No. 258 of the 23rd ultimo, I forwarded to your Lordship copy of a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reporting an affray between revolutionaries and regular troops at Zronk.

I have now the honour to transmit copy of a further telegram from Captain Maunsell reporting the dismissal of the Governor of Mush, and urging the desirability of his reinstatement in view of the critical state of affairs in the neighbourhood.

I have laid the contents of these telegrams before the Sultan through the medium of the First Secretary, submitting that it seemed to be advisable for the present to retain the Governor of Mush at his post.

His Majesty sent me a courteous message in reply to the effect that he much appreciated the interest which I had shown in the Armenian and Macedonian questions, and that he was grateful for the result of my action.

His Majesty said that he would have retained the Governor at his post in compliance with my suggestion, but that official had unfortunately been dismissed five days before, and had already left Mush. His relations had not been good with the Vali, and to send him back again would not be conducive to the proper conduct of affairs.

His Majesty promised to send the most positive orders to the Acting Governor to spare no efforts to maintain order and to reassure the population of the town. His Majesty also promised to take special care that the new Governor should be an experienced and trustworthy official, Zihni Pasha, the President of the Commission for the appointment of police functionaries, had already been instructed in this sense, and these instructions would now be repeated.

I have since heard that the Governor's recall was due to a Palace intrigue of the kind so common in this country, set on foot by the Vali of Bitlis.

In a telegram dated the 24th May, Captain Maunsel reports that he was leaving for Mush on the following day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 112.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.)

Bitlis, May 23, 1899.

GOVERNOR of Mush dismissed and summoned to Constantinople. It is important that he should be retained at present critical time.

He has protected the Christians, and recently prevented a massacre in the town where feeling is very high after death of prominent notable of the town in the fight at Zronk.

Vali is his enemy. Successor has a bad record, and grave disturbances are sure to result from his appointment.

No. 113.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 296.)

Therapia, June 10, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 258 of the 23rd ultimo, reporting an affray between revolutionists and regular troops at Zronk, and to the concluding paragraph of my despatch No. 291 of the 6th instant, I have now the honour to report that Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van has returned to his post after visiting Mush.

In a telegram received this morning, Captain Maunsell states that when he passed through the disturbed district, the Government were continuing their search for revolutionists, but were not generally molesting the innocent villagers, and that at Zronk the regular troops had almost completed the restoration of cattle pillaged by Kurds during the recent disturbance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 114.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 302.)

Constantinople, June 19, 1899.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 296 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, relative to the affray between Armenian revolutionaries and regular troops at Zronk, in the Mush Plain.

Captain Maunsell, who, as your Lordship will remember, was authorized by me to undertake a journey to Mush, has now returned to his post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 114.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 23.)

Bitlis, May 21, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that I arrived here on the 19th instant through Karchikan, Khizan, and Ispairt districts to see the state of the country for distribution of relief, and regarding which I propose to render to your Excellency a detailed report on my return to Van.

On arrival here I found that the Christian population were considerably excited over recent events in the Mush Plain, due to the proceedings of Armenian revolutionists.

On the 7th instant a battalion of regular troops was sent to the village of Zronk, in Mush Plain, information having been received that some revolutionists were hidden there.

They found eight revolutionists, with their leader, Gurgen, posted on or near the village threshing floor, while eleven others were concealed in a ravine close by. These latter fled and managed to escape.

After a struggle lasting, it is said, four hours, Gurgen and all his band were destroyed.

Two of the band, Gurgen and Persend, were directly from Russia, but the others were natives of this country.

The rifles taken from them, and which the Military Commandant here showed me, are the Russian magazine rifle with Government mark.

Talib Effendi, a leading Notable of Mush, Hassan Chaoush, a cousin of the Alai Bey, of Bitlis, and eight regular soldiers were killed.

I am assured by both the Vali and Commandant that no Hamidié troops have been called out or utilized for these disturbances.

The villagers of Zronk fled during the fight, but have subsequently returned.

Rumours from Armenian sources say that this village and three others in the vicinity were plundered, and the inhabitants massacred, but there are only vague rumours of which I can trace no confirmation.

If such had happened, by this time some further information would have arrived.

The Vali has welcomed my arrival here, and, as far as I can see, has given me all possible information at his command.

Also on my way from Van a Kaïmakam, of the Caza through which I passed, happening to be away in Bitlis, was ordered at once to return in order to meet me.

In previous struggles with these revolutionists the Government policy has been to attack only the revolutionists, and protect the innocent villagers, and I think they still adhere to this course.

On the 22nd April, at Taghud, two revolutionists and four villagers were killed, but it is difficult to say whether the latter were not sympathizers.

The principal leader, Sirop, is unfortunately still at large, and as he moves rapidly from place to place, and terrorizes any of his compatriots likely to give information, he has eluded all attempts at capture.

At Dapavank, on the 27th March, for example, the revolutionists killed one man, wounded three others and a woman, all of their compatriots.

Some information has been given to Government, and the Armenian Bishop here tells me he has used all his influence to induce the villagers to give up the revolutionists.

One battalion with a battery of mountain guns from here, with some other troops from Mush, accompanied by the Public Prosecutor of Bitlis and some police officials, have recently left for Sasun, as the Vali says, to search for arms, but, as other accounts say, to search for Sirop and his band.

I would venture to suggest that I may be permitted to proceed at once to Mush and Sasun, returning by Akhlat.

This would, I think, tend to reassure the Christian population, and the Government would apparently be glad of the statements of an impartial witness.

I have had the honour to communicate the substance of the above to your Excellency by telegraph.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 115.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 304.)
Constantinople, June 19, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting that, at the instigation of the Vali, the Notables of the various non-Protestant Christian communities of the district are demanding the expulsion of the American Missions.

I have communicated the substance of this telegram to the United States' Minister, and at Mr. Straus' request I have authorized Mr. Jones to keep him informed of any further developments.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 115.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

Diarbekir, June 15, 1899.
(Telegraphic.)

I AM informed mazbata prepared by Vali's instigation has been signed by the Notables of the various Christian communities other than Protestant against the American Missions, and asking for their expulsion. Terror produced by his Excellency's administration so great that several natives have signed through fear of incurring his displeasure. Details given in my letter of the 13th June.

No. 116.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 307.)
Constantinople, June 22, 1899.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, respecting the revolt of a Kurdish tribe in the Dersim district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 116.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15.)
Diarbekir, June 3, 1899.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that according to information received from Kharput a disturbance appears to have broken out in the Dersim district of that province, the result of a fray which took place between the predatory Kurdish tribe of the Khoja Ushaghi's, whose leaders are chosen from the Idaré family, and the Government police, three of whom were wounded, while the Kurds lost two men, one of the killed being a member of the leading family. The Chief of the tribe has declared his intention of taking a life for every hair of his brother, and the tribesmen having burnt their houses have taken refuge in the mountain so as to be able to carry on a guerrilla campaign against the authorities.

A Government official, whose house at Chemishghezek had been plundered by the tribe some weeks ago, was induced to trust their word that his property should be restored to him if he went in person to their haunts, and suffered for his credulity by having both his ears cut off, his life being spared in order that he might return to Chemishghezek with a message to the local Kaimakam that all Government officials falling into the hands of the tribe might expect to receive similar treatment.

Since that time the rebel tribe has made a raid upon the flocks of a certain Salim Bey, one of the leading men of Chemishghezek. The other Kurds of the district have fortunately remained quiet, but should they make common cause with the rebels, the outlook for the Government cannot but become serious.

My informant states that he has reason to believe the above account, derived from a reliable source, to be substantially true. He adds that he has also heard that the Kurds of Kemakh have broken out into open revolt.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

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